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   This study examines the roles and relationships of objectives, effects and end states across the strategic and operational levels of war in order to provide greater clarity for campaign planners. With its inclusion in the recently updated joint doctrine on planning, the effects-based approach to operations attempts to capture the latest insights on warfare. Unfortunately, the new joint doctrine fails to clearly articulate its advantages and scope of applicability, allows inconsistencies internal to itself and with previous doctrine to remain, and causes confusion in formerly well-understood concepts. With the goal of providing a more consistent framework than that offered by joint doctrine, this study, supported by lessons from the Vietnam War, examines why the nesting of objectives, effects and end states must be understood in order to successfully design campaigns to achieve strategic ends.

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**JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE**
**JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL**



## CLARIFYING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OBJECTIVES, EFFECTS AND END STATES WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND LESSONS FROM THE VIETNAM WAR

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

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5 April 2007

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# ABSTRACT

This study examines the roles and relationships of objectives, effects and end states across the strategic and operational levels of war in order to provide greater clarity for campaign planners.  With its inclusion in the recently updated joint doctrine on planning, the effects-based approach to operations attempts to capture the latest insights on warfare.  Unfortunately, the new joint doctrine fails to clearly articulate its advantages and scope of applicability, allows inconsistencies internal to itself and with previous doctrine to remain, and causes confusion in formerly well-understood concepts.  With the goal of providing a more consistent framework than that offered by joint doctrine, this study, supported by lessons from the Vietnam War, examines why the nesting of objectives, effects and end states must be understood in order to successfully design campaigns to achieve strategic ends.

# DEDICATION

*To those who serve the Nation so others and our children may live in a safer World.*

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**INTRODUCTION**

*<u>Purpose</u>*

In the future, the United States may have few opportunities for relatively quick

military victories over its enemies, such as those in Operations Urgent Fury, Just Cause,

Desert Storm, and Allied Force.  It may no longer enjoy predominantly safe

environments for its forces committed to long-duration stabilization of failing or failed

states, or be able to choose which environments are acceptable for such efforts.  In short,

future military planning must look beyond major operations or extended peace operations

to advance national interests.  If the years since 2001 are any indication, military planners

must again be prepared to design full-up campaigns of extended durations; in complex

and shifting conditions; against highly adaptive and decentralized enemies; among other

actors with diverse and disparate agendas; and, consisting of simultaneous and carefully

sequenced operations across a full range of military activity.

Unfortunately, the joint doctrine revisions of 2006 fall somewhat short of

preserving the professional planning strengths of the U.S. Military: a well-understood

lexicon, a proven approach to complex problem-solving, and a deliberately-evolved

planning process for developing and communicating detailed direction.  Instead, the

emerging doctrine provides overly complex and under-developed new tools and concepts

to military campaign planners, confounding previously well-understood doctrine in the

process.[1]  It is akin to providing a toolbox of prototype tools to a carpenter with the

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[1] Whenever the terms "doctrine" or "joint doctrine" are used in this study, they refer to U.S. joint doctrine, unless otherwise specified.  Joint doctrine, published by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, establishes fundamental principles to guide employment of U.S. military forces in coordinated action between the U.S. Military Departments.  The study always sought joint definitions or descriptions of concepts.  However, because joint doctrine did not exist prior to the 1990s, the study looked to the U.S. military doctrine that did exist (often U.S. Army doctrine) in order to provide historical perspectives throughout the analysis.

expectation that he will not only understand how to use each of them, but also understand how to use them collectively to build the family dream house.  Certainly, it would be no consolation to the carpenter if he were told that understanding how to use his tools was the "art" of carpentry.

This study attempts to close some existing gaps in joint doctrine.  Specifically, it explores the roles and relationships of end states, objectives, and effects across the strategic and operational levels of war.  It seeks to show how a more complete understanding of these roles and relationships will enhance joint operation planning, or the "planning activities associated [with] joint military operations by combatant commanders and their subordinate joint force commanders in response to contingencies and crises."[2]  Hopefully, it will serve to drive discussion and further innovation.  Perhaps it might even provide some practical utility for the planners or doctrine writers who read it.  However, in the end, those who disagree with its contents must articulate their counter-arguments, which in and of itself would satisfy the purpose of this study: to provide greater clarity for the military planners who must go forth and develop American military campaigns for the present and future.

## *Scope*

Planning at all levels is a balance of science and art.  While planners may agree on approaches to strategic problems, such as the established framework of ends, ways and means, how planners define ends, develop ways, employ means, and mitigate risks may be quite diverse.  This reality exists because the art of strategic and operational planning is limited only by the imagination of individuals, supported by their skill,

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[2] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 26 December 2006, accessed 19 January 2007); available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp5_0.pdf; Internet, GL-14.

knowledge, and experience.[3]  Furthermore, planning is always influenced by

contemporary understanding of the strategic and operational environments, the nature and

conduct of war, and the impact of technology.  These intangibles of art being too diverse

for analysis, the scope of this study focuses on military science and how it enables the

exercise of operational art in campaign planning.

Additionally, any analysis of campaign planning must include examination of

operational design, which establishes the conceptual underpinnings of all plans and their

subsequent execution.  Rather than focusing on each of the operational design elements

described in joint doctrine, particularly as many only gain true relevance through artful

application, this study will focus on the front-end elements of operational design

(Termination, End State, Objectives, and Effects), introducing other elements only as

necessary to better understand those within the scope.  Finally, while briefly highlighting

some different effects-based approaches, this study will attempt to avoid much of their

associated controversy by focusing its analysis on the current doctrinal approach.  This

will become particularly important as the Vietnam War's end states, objectives and

effects are examined, for that specific conflict often fuels the controversy over effects-

based approaches.[4]

### *Current Doctrine*

Because warfare is not governed by immutable laws, such as those present in a

physical science, it is difficult to determine a dominant theory of warfare from which

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[3] This statement draws on the joint doctrine definition for "operational art."

[4] For examples of the debate over failures and successes of effects-based approaches in past wars, including Vietnam, see Ralph Peters, "Bloodless Theories, Bloody Wars," *Armed Forces Journal* (April 2006, accessed 12 November 2006); available from http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/04/1813800; Internet; and Edward J. Wiessing, "Making Every Bullet Count," *Armed Forces Journal* (May 2006, accessed 12 November 2006); available from http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/05/1669970; Internet.

investigation can proceed.  However, doctrine is a suitable substitute.  A doctrine is

normally a body of principles in a branch of knowledge, established through assessment

of the past, and taught within a profession.  The U.S. military defines joint doctrine as

presenting "fundamental principles that guide the employment of US military forces in

coordinated action toward a common objective. It represents what is taught, believed and

advocated as what is right (i.e., what works best). It provides the distilled insights and

wisdom gained from experience in warfare and other operations requiring the use of the

military instrument of national power."[5]

With it's inclusion in the recently updated joint doctrine on planning, the effects-

based approach to operations represents the latest "distilled insights and wisdom gained

from experience in warfare."  An effects-based approach "calls for thinking differently

about how best to employ national instruments of power…a broader and deeper

understanding…a systems perspective of the operational area (OA). This understanding

and thinking includes how to use the military instrument beyond just force on-force

campaigns, battles and engagements."[6]  Simply stated, the current doctrine in *Joint*

*Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning* asserts that when one acts in the operational

environment, one creates or generates effects.  If one can better understand enemy or

adversary centers of gravity, and associated vulnerabilities, through a systems view of the

environment, one may better determine how to generate effects supportive of objectives,

and limit those which inhibit objectives, thus more effectively achieving the desired end

state and success.  As Fig. 1 depicts, consideration of effects is advocated at the

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[5] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, as amended through 16 October 2006, accessed 5 November 2006); available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf; Internet, 286.

[6] U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Commander's Handbook for an Effects-Based Approach to Joint Operations* (Suffolk, VA: Joint Warfighting Center, 24 February 2006), viii.

operational and theater strategic levels of war.



**Fig. 1. Consideration of Effects across the Levels of War.[7]**

## *Problem*

Unfortunately, the apparent simplicity of the current joint doctrine becomes decidedly more complex in reality, where practitioners of joint operation planning and operational design must actually develop and articulate meaningful end states, objectives, and effects. It becomes particularly unwieldy when its omissions, inconsistencies, and incongruence with previous doctrine are left to planners to reconcile for themselves.

First, battles, operations (joint, major, etc.), and campaigns are all military actions in the operational environment, and according to the current joint doctrine, actions cause effects. As such, joint force activity from the smallest battle to a theater-wide campaign will result in some effect or set of effects. If a bomb explodes, it causes an effect on its target; if it results in collateral damage, or it is perceived that it does, it may cause additional effects in the operational environment. If a military deception is successfully executed, such as at the Pas de Calais in World War II, its effect can alter the course of a

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[7] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), III-13.

major operation.  That actions cause effects is a truism; therefore, the best an effects-

based approach can offer is increased consideration of a better understood reality.

Because military operations (and national policy) have long been focused on objectives,

it must be more easily understood why an effects-based approach is superior to an

objectives-based approach, and why only at the operational and theater strategic levels,

but less so at the national strategic or tactical levels of war.[8]  Failure to do so is analogous

to advocating relativistic physics over Newtonian physics without emphasizing its

superiority only when examining behaviors approaching the speed of light.

That the Theory of Relativity gained acceptance was based in large part on its

consonance with Newtonian physics when the simple apple fell from the tree.  The

second problem with current joint doctrine is its lack of explaining the impact of effects

in simple terms, consistent with previously well-understood concepts.  By their

definition, end states and effects are both articulated in terms of conditions in the

environment – the former representing some desired set of conditions at the end of an

operation or campaign, and the later representing measurable changes in conditions.

While as recently as 2001, an objective was defined as a "physical object" of action

deemed essential to the plan, it also represented the specific goals toward which all

operations are directed.[9]  Since operations are military actions, and result in effects, this

would imply that the goals for operations, or objectives, should be desired effects.  This

would establish a direct relationship between conditions affected and the end state

conditions desired.  However, this is contrary to the existing joint doctrine.  In essence,

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[8] The term "effects-based operations" will be avoided throughout this study.  Instead it will use the broader term "effects-based approaches," which includes the "effects-based approach to operations."

[9] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 12 April 2001), 305.

while the logic of the doctrine implies that actions should be conducted towards

objectives which generate desired effects leading to the end state, the actual doctrine

reverses the relationship, asserting that actions "create effects to achieve objectives to

attain an end state."[10]  Therefore, the problem is not only that the current doctrine is

inconsistent with previous doctrine, it is inconsistent with itself.

Further confusion ensues because articulated examples of end state, objectives

and effects in current doctrinal publications are indistinguishable.[11]  This confusion is

compounded by diverse, and often contradictory, definitions of each term within the same

document.  Some, such as Dr. Milan Vego, charge proponents of an effects-based

approach with redefining established terms in order to "make effects, not objectives, the

central part of the military decision-making and planning process."[12]  Regardless of the

cause, but at least coincident with the inclusion of effects in joint operation planning,

joint doctrine has created a third problem by completely confusing the previous

understanding of end states and objectives.

In summary, the new joint doctrine fails to clearly articulate its advantages and

scope of applicability, allows inconsistencies internal to itself and with previous doctrine

to remain, and causes confusion in formerly well-understood concepts.  In turn, this lack

of clarity in the roles of, definitions of, and relationships between end states, objectives

and effects results in a poorly understood framework for arranging operations in time and

space to achieve strategic ends.  Furthermore, it results in time wasted by semantic

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[10] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 17 September 2006, accessed 19 January 2007); available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_0.pdf; Internet, iii.

[11] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), III-6 – III-14.

[12] Milan N. Vego, Ph.D., "The Problem of Common Terminology," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 43 (4th Quarter 2006): 45.

arguments over what is an effect versus an objective versus an end state, and "chicken and egg" arguments over which elements drive which, rather than focusing on the nesting of strategy to tactics, which is the true role of operational art. None of the concepts is completely meaningful unless discussed across the levels of war. When military operations are complex, or the situation requires relating several operations in concert with other national efforts, results of tactical actions are meaningless unless tied to the strategy via the operational level of war, or campaign planning.

## *Thesis*

With the goal of providing a more consistent framework than that offered by joint doctrine, this study examines the thesis that a clear and critical relationship exists between objectives, effects and end states across the levels of war, which must be understood in order to successfully design campaigns to achieve strategic ends.

## *Method*

Cautious of semantics replacing or negating meaningful analysis, the study begins by clearly establishing the background terminology used throughout its subsequent analysis. Then, although appreciating that doctrine may vary over time, the study seeks insights from enduring historical trends in American military doctrine in order to establish baseline roles for, and relationships between, objectives and end states. Despite the rarity of having clear national objectives and end states to inform joint operation planning, these elements of operational design were uncharacteristically explicit as the United States entered the Vietnam War, resulting in a multi-faceted campaign conducted within the context of global conflict, the Cold War. Therefore, the study continues its analysis by using the Vietnam War to illustrate the baseline objective-end state

relationship.

Next, the study introduces the effects-based approach to operations, first through a brief recap of its evolution, and then by describing its current use in joint doctrine.  By heavily relying on examples and text from the current joint doctrine, the study is able to show the doctrine's inconsistencies with the baseline objective-end state relationship. These inconsistencies are then clarified in an attempt to deduce a complementary inclusion of effects within the baseline objective-end state relationship.  Additionally, the study explores the relative utility of these concepts and their relationships at the strategic and operational levels of war.

Recognizing that a single historical case is insufficient to prove the thesis of the study, and that doctrinal deficiencies can be overcome by intuitive operational genius, the study concludes by examining the Vietnam War in order to better appreciate a few lessons for the practicing campaign planner seeking to employ an effects-based approach. The War provides good examples of activity at all of the levels of war and was long enough to experience significant changes in the strategic and operational environments. Most importantly, it was an effects-based approach to operations, contrary to popular beliefs and statements, very consistent with today's joint doctrine on the subject.  With tremendous relevancy for today's challenges, the War's lessons appear to indicate that failing to understand the conceptual relationships between and within objectives, effects and end states will result in something less than desired ends, despite an aggressive focus on effects.

**CHAPTER 1**

**BACKGROUND TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

Before examining joint operation planning and operational design in detail, it is

useful to review and establish the background terms which are central to the analysis

contained in this study.  As stated in the introduction, current joint doctrine will serve as a

common departure point.  Since this doctrine is at best 20 years old, additional sources

are introduced as necessary to amplify interpretations or the background of the following

terms.

*Conceptual Levels of War*

First, it is helpful to begin by defining the conceptual levels of war.  These assist

planners at all echelons to organize their thought, although some have correctly pointed

out that the levels, defined below in terms of actions, may also be considered in terms of

the consequences of their outcome.[13]

- **Strategic Level of War** – The level of war at which a nation, often as a member of a group of nations, determines national or multinational (alliance or coalition) strategic security objectives and guidance, and develops and uses national resources to achieve these objectives.[14]
- **Operational Level of War** – The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to achieve strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas. Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operational objectives needed to achieve the strategic objectives, sequencing events to achieve the operational objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events.[15]
- **Tactical Level of War** – The level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives

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[13] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 14 June 1993, accessed 5 November 2006); available from http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/contentdm/home.htm; Internet, 1-3.

[14] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02* (16 October 2006), 514.

[15] Ibid., 394.

assigned to tactical units or task forces.[16]

The term "**national strategic**" has often been used synonymously with the formal

definition for the strategic level of war cited above; however, this study considers the

adjective "national" as describing collective national activity (e.g. U.S. Government

action), as opposed to subordinate military activity, diplomatic activity, etc.  Similarly,

the study considers "**regional**" or "**theater strategic**" as adjectives indicating a smaller

geographic scope (e.g. a U.S. Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) Area of

Responsibility (AOR)), rather than a different conceptual level of war.  While one may

argue that "theater strategic" is the **nexus** between the strategic and operational levels of

war, this study considers it simply a more focused view than a "**global strategic**" scope,

which is normally the view from which at least U.S. national strategy begins.

### *The Environment*

This study will distinguish between the operational environment and the strategic

environment.  The **operational environment,** formerly called battlespace, is "a

composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of

capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander."[17]  Although it possibly

presents the danger of constraining one's thinking, for better or worse, joint doctrine has

agreed upon general categories of conditions in the operational environment (see Fig. 2)

as a common departure point, from which to begin better appreciating its complex nature:

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[16] Ibid., 530.

[17] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), GL-25; the decision to replace "battlespace" with "operational environment" is confirmed in this document's "Summary of Changes" on page iii.  The concept of "operational environment," however, should not be construed as completely new.  It was described in terms similar to today's definition by U.S. Army doctrine in both the 1962 and 1968 versions of *Field Manual 100-5*.

Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, Infrastructure (**PMESII**), and others.[18]
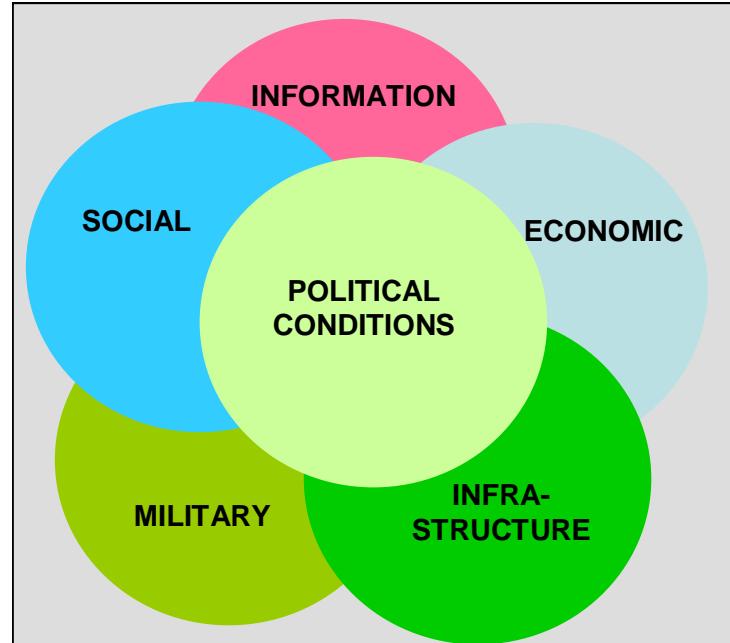


**Fig. 2. Conditions in the Environment.[19]**

Although its name and definition do not imply this, the operational environment is now commonly used in joint doctrine to describe conditions at both the strategic and operational levels of war, varying in scope from an operational area to the entire globe. Therefore, it may be considered synonymous with the **security environment, national security environment, or strategic environment** referenced in older joint doctrinal publications and other works on strategy.[20]  However, because this study wishes to highlight the relationships of conditions across the levels of war, it will use operational environment to refer to conditions considered at the operational level of war, including the actors which influence these conditions (sometimes depicted as a complex system,

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[18] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), II-21.

[19] Derived from U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), II-22.

[20] For example, "national security environment" was referenced in U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0, Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 13 April 1995), II-5; and, the "security environment" was described in U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1 February 1995), I-1.

e.g. Fig. 3), and strategic environment to refer to similar considerations at the strategic level.
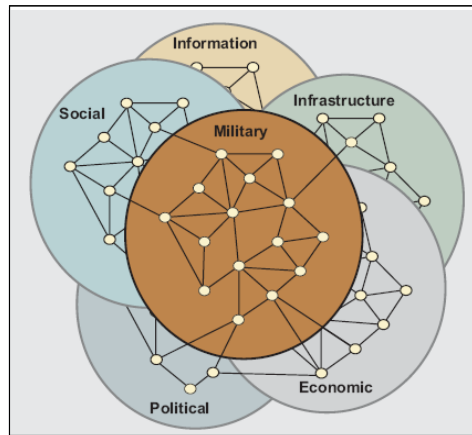


**Fig. 3. Complex Systems in the Environment.[21]**

Without an established framework in doctrine for the primary actors in the environment, and in an effort to progress from simple to more complex discussions, the analysis in this study will often begin by considering situations of warfare with an **enemy**, but then attempt to more appropriately describe the environment from peace to war by also considering **adversaries**. The study assumes one's enemies and adversaries have in common a zero-sum outlook, where one gains only by the enemies' or adversaries' loss, and vice versa. However, the study also assumes they are distinguished by the existence of open hostilities with an enemy, while adversaries will challenge one's state in somewhat less direct ways. **Competitors**, on the other hand, are assumed to be driven solely by securing their own potential gain, and although they may create conditions which lead to some loss by one's state, their strategy is not predicated on this result.

Finally, the study assumes a state's efforts may also be undermined by

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[21] Ibid.

**conditional impediments** (e.g. poverty, disease, dearth of resources, etc.) in the strategic

and operational environments. These make attaining one's goals challenging irrespective

of the actors in the environment, although certainly the existence of enemies, adversaries,

and competitors complicates the matter further. In fact, enemies, adversaries,

competitors, and conditional impediments might be so formidable, individually or

collectively, that partnerships must be formed to overcome them. **Allies** are partners who

arrive at some formal agreement for broad, long-term goals that further common

interests, whereas one's state may enter into an informal **coalition** of partners for more

specific, short term goals.[22] Fig. 4 illustrates the above spectrum of actors in the strategic

and operational environments.
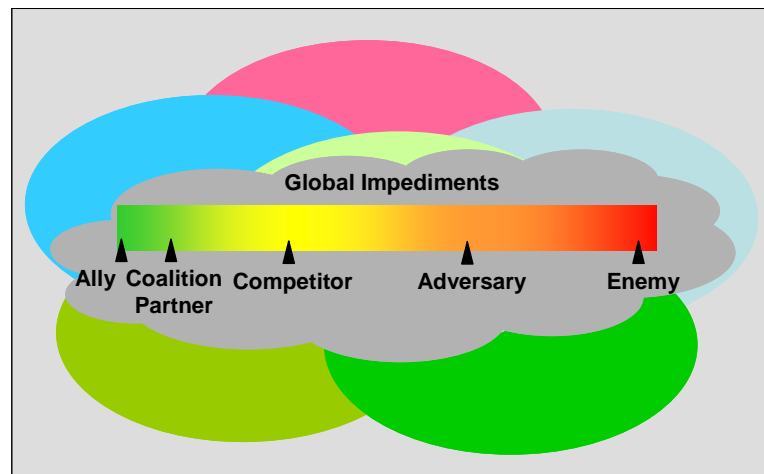


**Fig. 4. Spectrum of Actors in the Environment.**

Because this study relies on the concept of power, it is valuable to consider this

concept as it relates to the above actors in the environment. The zero-sum contests with

enemies and adversaries usually require coercive national power, employed in a classic

Clausewitzian contest of wills. As Dr. Joseph Nye has argued, **hard power** is employed

to *make* others do what one wants, and is particularly important when the survival of

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[22] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), GL-6.

states is at stake.  However, since one's state is more often engaged in competitive environments, it is perhaps wise to also consider Dr. Nye's concept of **soft power**, or employing national power to *convince* others to want what one wants.[23]  This concept is particularly useful when considering how to transform competitors into partners to overcome enemies, adversaries and conditional impediments.

### *Planning Frameworks and Processes*

Obviously, a study of planning should define *what planning is* before beginning to discuss it.  While not discussed in most military doctrine, many historians and military theorists generally agree that national strategy should begin with what is often called grand strategy.  The closest the military has come to defining it was in previous doctrine, as synonymous with national security strategy: "The art and science of developing, applying, and coordinating the instruments of national power…to achieve objectives that contribute to national security."[24]  However, this may be easily confused with the President's National Security Strategy, a document mandated by U.S. budget legislation, which may or may not fulfill the purposes of grand strategy.  For, much broader than describing a specific strategy or approach, **grand strategy** often aims to describe an overarching purpose and vision around which all strategic activity is centered.[25]  The part of the military definition which definitely retains value, however, is its recognition that this strategic activity must be an integrated effort between all instruments of national

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[23] Joseph S. Nye, *Power in the Global Information Age* (London: Routledge, 2004), 72-76.
[24] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 10 September 2001), GL-14.
[25] For more discussion of grand strategy, see B.H. Liddell Hart, "The Theory of Strategy," in *Strategy* (New York: Meridian Books, 1967), 319-333 or Paul Kennedy, "Grand Strategy in War and Peace: Toward a Broader Definition," in *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, ed. Paul Kennedy, et al (New York: Yale University Press, 1991), 1-7.

power: diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME).[26]

Although there are many processes and methods for strategists to conduct strategic planning, most use some form of an **ends, ways, and means** framework. Within this framework, ends are the goals, means are the resources, and ways are the concepts for employing those resources to achieve the ends. This framework is further enhanced by including thoughtful risk mitigation and an appreciation for the impacts of the strategic environment and resource constraints.[27]

**Joint operation planning** is one of three military contributions to national strategic planning (the other two being security cooperation planning and force planning).[28] It is the "planning activities associated [with] joint military operations by combatant commanders and their subordinate joint force commanders in response to contingencies and crises."[29] Despite its focus on military activity, it "provides the joint doctrinal basis for US military coordination with other agencies and for US military involvement in multinational operations," and consists of the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES) and the Joint Operation Planning Process (JOPP).[30] While JOPES specifies policies, procedures, and reporting structures to facilitate interaction with the National Command Authority (NCA), JOPP is "an orderly, analytical planning process, which consists of a set of logical steps to analyze a mission, develop, analyze, and compare alternative courses of action (COAs), select the best COA, and

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[26] Although some have added financial, legal, etc., this study will simply use DIME as representative of all instruments. It also assumes that "psychological," included in the Army doctrine of the 1960s, is incorporated into DIME as a sub-set of "informational."

[27] Although joint and Service doctrine relies on and discusses "ends, ways, and means," for a more complete discussion of this framework see Henry C. Bartlett, G. Paul Holman, Jr., and Timothy E. Somes, "The Art of Strategy and Force Planning," in *Strategy and Force Planning*, ed. Security, Strategy, and Forces Faculty, 4th ed. (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 2004), 17-33.

[28] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), ix.

[29] Ibid., GL-14.

[30] Ibid., i.

produce a plan or order."[31]
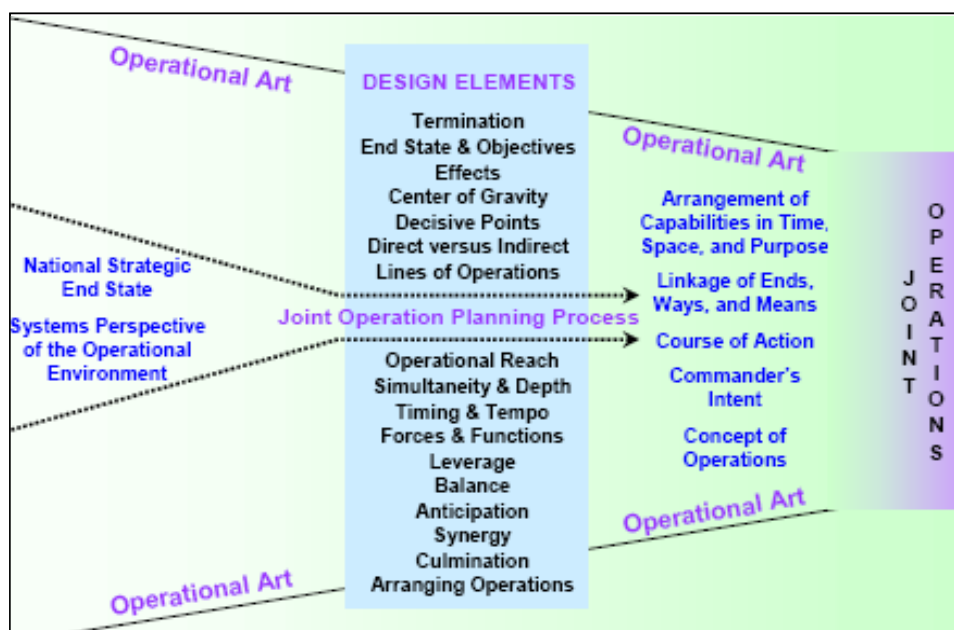


**Fig. 5. Elements of Operational Design.[32]**

While the name may imply a focus on the operational level of war, joint operation

planning serves planning at both the strategic and operational levels, and should ensure

the nesting of plans across these levels.  An inherent part of joint operation planning,

**operational design**, consisting of 17 elements (See Fig. 5), is "the conception and

construction of the framework that underpins a campaign or major operation plan and its

subsequent execution."[33]  Formerly referred to as "fundamental elements," or "facets" of

operational art, the **elements of operational design** are a doctrinal attempt to provide

planners with a set of tools for establishing this framework.[34]  It is the beginning of a

tangible definition for the nebulous **operational art**, "the application of creative

imagination by commanders and staffs — supported by their skill, knowledge, and

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[31] Ibid., xiii.
[32] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), IV-5.
[33] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02* (16 October 2006), 394.
[34] Last referenced in U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (10 September 2001), III-9 – III-10.  It is also referred to by these names in the 1995 version.

experience — to design strategies, campaigns, and major operations and organize and employ military forces."[35]  Again, despite the names, both operational design and operational art apply across the levels of war, as acknowledged in a previous doctrinal definition of operational art, "the employment of military forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives…by integrating the key activities of all levels of war."[36]

### *Forms of Military Action*

In light of the above discussion, the operational level of war, stated differently, is simply the linking of tactical means to achieve strategic ends, usually through a campaign or major operation (ways).  For example, a **campaign** is "a series of related major operations aimed at achieving strategic and operational objectives within a given time and space," developed through **campaign planning**, "the process whereby combatant commanders and subordinate joint force commanders translate national or theater strategy into operational concepts through the development of an operation plan for a campaign."[37]  Relevant to later analysis, it is helpful to compare the following joint and Service definitions with that of a campaign to recognize that they all describe military actions of various scopes and implied durations:

- **Major Operation –** a series of tactical actions (battles, engagements, strikes) conducted by combat forces of a single or several Services, coordinated in time and place, to achieve strategic or operational objectives in an operational area. These actions are conducted simultaneously or sequentially in accordance with a common plan and are controlled by a single commander. For noncombat operations, a reference to the relative size and scope of a military operation.[38]

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[35] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), GL-24.

[36] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (1 February 1995), GL-10.

[37] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), GL-6.  Although this document also distinguishes between global, theater, and subordinate campaigns, these are more recognitions of scope (much like the adjectives associated with the strategic level of war) than a meaningful distinction between types of "campaigns."

[38] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), GL-21.

- **Operation** – 1. A military action or the carrying out of a strategic, operational, tactical, service, training, or administrative military mission. 2. The process of carrying on combat, including movement, supply, attack, defense, and maneuvers needed to gain the objectives of any battle or campaign.[39]
- **Battle** – a set of related engagements that lasts longer and involves larger forces than an engagement.[40]
- **Engagement** – a tactical conflict, usually between opposing lower echelons maneuver forces.[41]

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[39] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02* (16 October 2006), 392.

[40] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Publishing Directorate, 14 June 2001), 2-5.

[41] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02* (16 October 2006), 186.

# CHAPTER 2

## CLARIFYING THE ROLE OF OBJECTIVES

The first focus of this study is the concept of "objective." According to current joint doctrine, an objective is "the clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal toward which every operation is directed," or "the specific target of the action taken."[42] However, this concept is often misapplied and confused with that of "end state" by joint operation planners, largely due to conflicting descriptions of both in current joint doctrine. Through examining the doctrinal history of the objective of war, the military objective in war, and objective as a principle for the conduct of military operations, this chapter attempts to arrive at a clear and practical understanding of the roles of objectives.

As part of his criticism of current terminology, Dr. Milan Vego points out that "the terms *aims*, *goals*, and *objectives* are often used interchangeably." He defines **aim** as "to direct or intend something toward a given purpose," a **goal** as "the result or achievement toward which an effort is directed," and an objective as "something that one's efforts are intended to accomplish or to serve as the basis for military or nonmilitary action." While he concedes that goals and aims may be appropriate terms for broad national strategy, he argues that objectives require greater specificity in order to focus action. He describes objectives as the purpose of an operation, or the *why*.[43] Both of these characteristics of objectives (purpose and specificity) are useful to keep in mind as the concept of "objective" is examined below.

### *Objective of War and the Military Objective in War*

In *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz argues that war is "an act of force to compel our

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[42] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), GL-24.
[43] Vego, 45.

enemy to do our will."[44]  He introduces almost immediately in Book 1 (his most coherent work) the ultimate **objective of war**: "To impose our will on the enemy is [war's] *object*;" and the ultimate **military objective in war**: "We must render the enemy powerless."[45]  Clausewitz considered war a national effort, whose purpose was famously simplified by many as the extension of policy by other means.  This assumes a strategic context where other means to achieve one's will have failed or have been bypassed, and the *imposition* of will is required by war.  In such circumstances, the purpose for the commitment of military forces is removal of the enemy's power to resist – the target of operations, his fielded military forces.  Thus, this objective is strategic in nature for it focuses the application of military force in direct support of national strategic ends. These concepts have endured through their continued use in American doctrine, as shown by the historical U.S. Army doctrine in Table 1.

**Table 1. The Military Objective in War, 1939-1993**

- "The ultimate objective of all military operations is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces in battle. Decisive defeat in battle breaks the enemy's will to war and forces him to sue for peace which is the national aim." – *U.S. Army "General Principles," 1939*[a]
- "The ultimate objective of all military operations is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces in battle." – *U.S. Army "Doctrines of Combat," 1941 and 1944*[b]
- "The ultimate objective of all military operations is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces and his will to fight." – *U.S. Army "Principles of War," 1949*[c]
- "The ultimate military objective of war is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces and his will to fight." – *U.S. Army "Principles of War and Operational Concepts," 1962*[d]
- "The ultimate military objective of war is the defeat of the enemy's armed forces." – *U.S. Army "Principles of War," 1968*[e]
- "When the political end desired is the total defeat of the adversary, then the strategic military objective will most likely be the defeat of the enemy's armed forces and the destruction of his will to resist." – *U.S. Army "Principles of War," 1982*[f]
- "The objective of the military in war is victory over the opposing military force at the least cost to American soldiers." – *U.S. Army "Principles of War," 1993*[g]

Sources: [a]U.S. Department of War, *Field Manual 100-5, Tentative Field Service Regulations: Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1 October 1939, accessed 5 November 2006); available from http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/contentdm/home.htm; Internet, 27; [b]U.S. Department of War, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations: Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 22

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[44] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1993), 83.

[45] Ibid.

May 1941, accessed 5 November 2006); available from http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/contentdm/home.htm; Internet, 22; and, U.S. Department of War, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations: Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 15 June 1944, accessed 5 November 2006); available from http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/contentdm/home.htm; Internet, 32; [c]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations: Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 15 August 1949, accessed 5 November 2006); available from http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/contentdm/home.htm; Internet, 21; [d]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations: Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 19 February 1962, accessed 5 November 2006); available from http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/contentdm/home.htm; Internet, 46; [e]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Operations of Army Forces in the Field* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 6 September 1968, accessed 5 November 2006); available from http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/contentdm/home.htm; Internet, 5-1; [f]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 20 August 1982, accessed 5 November 2006); available from http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/contentdm/home.htm; Internet, B-1; [g]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (14 June 1993), 1-3.

At least two insights emerge from Table 1 on the evolution of the concept of objective to that of today. First, when war is undertaken for reasons of specific national interest, or what one may call today national strategic objectives, the military strategic objective is the rendering of the enemy powerless, usually through physical destruction of his capability and will for war. Second, military strategic objectives are always subordinate to the national strategic objectives.

**Table 2. The Military Objective in War and Other than War, 1995-Present**

- "The objective of combat operations is the destruction of the enemy armed forces' capabilities and will to fight. The objective of an operation other than war might be more difficult to define; nonetheless, it too must be clear from the beginning." – *U.S. "Principles of War," 1995 and 2001*[a]
- "The purpose of military operations is to achieve the military objectives that support attainment of the overall political goals of the conflict. This frequently involves the destruction of the enemy armed forces' capabilities and their will to fight. The objective of joint operations not involving this destruction might be more difficult to define; nonetheless, it too must be clear from the beginning." – *U.S. "Principles of War," 2006*[b]

Sources: [a]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (1 February 1995), A-1; [b]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), A-1.

In Table 2, one can see the broader use of objectives emerge concurrently with the

many peace operations, or military operations other than war, of the 1990s.[46]  While still

recognized that the strategic objective of military operations may be defeating an enemy,

or the enemy's armed forces the objective (in a target of action context), the proximate

cause for transitioning to broader goal-oriented military strategic objectives was most

likely the necessity of addressing commitment of military forces without an enemy,

which was the clear focus of Clausewitz in *On War*.  However, even with broadening

considerations, there is a continued expectation that military strategic objectives will

communicate the fundamental purpose for committing the military instrument of power

in support of national interests.  This is a third insight for the concept of military

objectives in war and other than war.

### *Objective as a Principle for the Conduct of Military Operations*

Regardless of a target-oriented or goal-oriented military strategic objective, the

principle of objective in the conduct of military operations has endured.  Although it

emerged in U.S. Army doctrine as early as 1949 under the overall title "Principles of

War," it was a concept refined in the inter-war period by non-American's such as J.F.C.

Fuller, and more loosely discussed in Army just prior to WWII.  Table 3 on the following

page provides evidence of its evolution, and the importance placed on it in American

doctrine since its inception.

At least three insights emerge from the evolution of the principle of objective

when conducting military operations.  First, although intermediate objectives may be

necessary in complex military operations, actions are focused toward their achievement,

and, in turn, they are focused toward achievement of the ultimate, or military strategic,

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[46] This is not to imply that peace operations, small wars, etc. were unique to the 1990s, but simply that consideration of these operations appears to have influenced capstone doctrine beginning in the 1990s.

objective.  Second, just as actions should be focused towards objectives, actions which do not support objectives should be avoided or limited.

**Table 3. The American Principle of Objective, 1939-Present**

- "…objectives must be well defined and must contribute toward the attainment of the ultimate objective." – *U.S. Army "General Principles," 1939*[a]
- "The selection of intermediate objectives whose attainment contributes most decisively and quickly to the accomplishment of the ultimate objective…" – *U.S. Army "Principles of War," 1949*[b]
- "The objective of each operation must contribute to [the] ultimate objective. Each intermediate objective must be such that its attainment will most directly, quickly, and economically contribute to the purpose of the operation." – *U.S. Army "Principles of War and Operational Concepts," 1962*[c]
- "The objective of each [operation] must contribute to the ultimate objective.  Each intermediate objective must be such that its attainment will most directly, quickly, and economically contribute the purpose of the operation." – *U.S. Army "Principles of War," 1968*[d]
- "Direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective." – *U.S. Army "Principles of War," 1982*[e]
- "Direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective...Actions that do not contribute to achieving the objective must be avoided." – *U.S. Army "Principles of War," 1993*[f]
- "The purpose of the objective is to direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective…Each operation must contribute to strategic objectives.  Avoid actions that do not contribute directly to achieving the objective." – *U.S. "Principles of War," 1995 and 2001*[g]
- "The purpose of the objective is to direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and achievable goal…Each operation must contribute to strategic objectives.  JFCs should avoid actions that do not contribute directly to achieving the objective(s)." – *U.S. "Principles of War," 2006*[h]

Sources: [a]U.S. Department of War, *Field Manual 100-5* (1 October 1939), 27; [b]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (15 August 1949), 21; [c]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (19 February 1962), 46; [d]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (6 September 1968), 5-1; [e]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (20 August 1982), B-1; [f]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (14 June 1993), 2-4; [g]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (1 February 1995), A-1.; and, U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (10 September 2001), A-1; [h]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), A-1.

Despite its history of inclusion in American principles to focus military effort, it was not until 2006 that joint doctrine updated the physical target-oriented *definition* of military objectives to explicitly include the non-physical: "The clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal toward which every operation is directed."[47]  Drawing its definition from Jominian terrain-oriented or enemy-oriented "objective points" prior to this, it was simply "the physical object of the action taken, e.g., a definite terrain feature, the seizure

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[47] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), GL-24.

and/or holding of which is essential to the commander's plan."[48]

While one may continue to argue that goals and objectives are not the same thing, simplicity and consistency must at times overrule semantics. Providing planners with a definitive and simple statement that military objectives *may also be specific goals* is a critical first step if they are to clearly articulate them, rather than simply understand that all actions should be directed toward them once established.  This is no trivial issue as outside the broader discussions of sections and appendices on the Principles of War and national strategy, past doctrinal discussions have tended to use examples of, and orient discussions on, physical target-oriented objectives almost exclusively.  The third insight therefore, is that military objectives may be either physical locations or things, or they may be non-physical; however, to properly retain the concept of "objective," they must be specific enough to focus action toward their attainment, and be *decisive*.  Collectively, each of the above insights on objectives point simultaneously

If the concept of "objective" is to be justifiably broadened, one must appreciate an increased demand on operational art in selecting objectives, commensurate with the transition from a purely enemy/terrain focus to a goal-oriented focus in a complex operational environment.  Many historical examples of warfare focused on the capital, fielded forces, a piece of terrain, or a particular ally as the decisive objective, and the maneuvering of friendly forces to achieve that decision.  Although somewhat theorized and practiced before, the grandiose and complex campaigns of World War II firmly solidified the operational level of war.  The selection of intermediate, or operational-level, objectives was the essence of operational art, and while there were better or worse

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[48] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02* (12 April 2001), 305.

objectives one could select, it was more difficult to judge objectives as clearly right or wrong.

Unfortunately, while the recent confusion of terminology may not be the result of championing effects-based approaches, as Dr. Vego alleges, the re-emergence of these approaches may be driving an unhealthy return to searching for the *right* objectives through military science, rather than fostering operational art in the design of complex campaigns.[49]  As this study highlights, the key to selecting better objectives through operational art and design is envisioning how their achievement contributes to higher ends across the levels of war.  Stated differently, one must visualize the purpose each intermediate objective serves on the physical or logical route to the higher objectives.

### *Practical Conclusions about Objectives*

The insights highlighted in the above discussion of objectives allow this study to settle on the following terminology indicative of the roles of objectives, beginning simply with: an **objective** is a target of action or a specific goal of action.  Although "tactical objectives often are associated with the specific 'target' of an action," at the operational and strategic levels, objectives will also, perhaps more often, be associated with the specified goals of operations and campaigns, chosen for their decisive impact on the outcome.[50]

As clearly articulated by the U.S. Army in 1962, "national objectives," or **national strategic objectives**, are those specific "goals whose attainment will further national interests… security and well-being," the interests, security and well-being

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[49] Vego, 45.
[50] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006) III-11.

normally being defined as part of the national grand strategy.[51]  Amplified, "[national]

objectives are the ends;" they "provide the departure point for national strategy in that

they describe what a state is actually trying to do."[52]

The U.S. Army also wrote as early as 1962 that "because the purpose of war is the

attainment of national objectives, military strategy must be geared to these

objectives….in the final analysis national objectives shape both national and military

strategy."[53]  However, this concept of nesting national and military strategies was best

recorded by the U.S. Army in 1982:

> As a derivative of the political aim, the strategic military objective of a
> nation at war must be to apply whatever degree of force is necessary to
> allow attainment of the political purpose or aim for which the war is being
> fought. When the political end desired is the total defeat of the adversary,
> then the strategic military objective will most likely be the defeat of the
> enemy's armed forces and the destruction of his will to resist. It is
> essential, however, that the political purpose be clearly defined and
> attainable by the considered application of the various elements of the
> nation's power. Not until the political purpose has been determined and
> defined by the President and Congress can [military] objectives be clearly
> identified and developed. Once developed, the strategic objectives must
> constantly be subjected to rigorous analysis and review to insure that they
> continue to reflect accurately not only the ultimate political end desired,
> but also any political constraints imposed on the application of military
> force.[54]

Therefore, **military strategic objectives** are the specific goals for employment of

a state's armed forces in support of national strategic objectives, usually "by applying

force or the threat of force."[55]  It is "one of the most important considerations in

operational design" for it defines "the role of military forces in the larger context of

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[51] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (19 February 1962), 3.
[52] U.S. Department of the Navy, *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-1, Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 12 November 1997, accessed 27 January 2007); available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/service_pubs/mcdp1_1.pdf; Internet, 38-39.
[53] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (19 February 1962), 4.
[54] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (20 August 1982), B-1.
[55] Ibid., 2-3.

national strategic objectives."[56]  Furthermore, the military strategic objective "provides

the basis for the identification of specific ways to accomplish that objective."[57]

Once strategic military considerations have been thoroughly addressed,

consideration may turn to major operations or campaigns, as to achieve the military

strategic objective, "one or more intermediate objectives may have to be determined.

These ['intermediate' or operational] objectives must be well defined and must contribute

toward the attainment of the ['ultimate' or strategic] objective."[58]  **Operational**

**objectives**, therefore, are specific intermediate goals or targets of action, carefully

arranged in time and space, whose purpose is to decisively contribute to the successful

accomplishment of the military strategic objective by the operation(s) or campaign.  They

"must be such that [their] attainment will most directly, quickly, and economically

contribute to the purpose of the operation."[59]  The objectives having been selected, "all

components are directed in coordinated effort towards [their] attainment.  Actions which

do not contribute to this purpose are avoided."[60]

Unfortunately, current joint doctrine deliberately provides no convention for the

writing of objective statements, prescribing only that they link to higher objectives, be as

unambiguous as possible, and avoid specifying ways and means for their

accomplishment.[61]  However, in addition to the above practical conclusions, and despite

its greater focus on the physical than the non-physical goal-oriented objective, U.S. Army

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[56] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-00.1, Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 25 January 2002, accessed 19 January 2007); available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp5_00.1.pdf; Internet, II-2.; U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), II-2.

[57] U.S. Department of the Navy, *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-1*, 41.

[58] U.S. Department of War, *Field Manual 100-5* (1 October 1939), 27.

[59] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (19 February 1962), 46.

[60] U.S. Department of War, *Field Manual 100-5* (22 May 1941), 97.

[61] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), III-11.

doctrine circa the Second World War provides some valuable additional advice for

planners developing objective statements.  An objective should be: easily identifiable,

produce a convergence of effort, facilitate contemplated future operations, and be

possible within the time and space limits imposed by the assigned mission.[62]

**Table 4. Summary of the Roles of Objectives**

- **Objectives** are specific goals or targets of action.
- **National Strategic Objectives** are the specific goals whose attainment will further the national interests, security and well-being articulated in a state's grand strategy.
- **Military Strategic Objectives** are the specific goals for employment of a state's armed forces in support of its national strategic objectives.
- **Operational Objectives** are specific intermediate goals or targets of action, carefully arranged in time and space, which contribute to the successful accomplishment of the military strategic objective by the operation(s) or campaign.

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[62] U.S. Department of War, *Field Manual 100-5* (22 May 1941), 97.

## CHAPTER 3

## CLARIFYING THE OBJECTIVE-END STATE RELATIONSHIP

As an indication that understanding the ends of strategy has existed for many years, Clausewitz succinctly summarized the importance of the political purpose in war: "No one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."[63]  However, the term "end state" has a much shorter history in American doctrine than objectives, appearing in joint doctrine in 1995, and hardly found in any U.S. doctrine prior to 1993.  Yet, descriptions of this concept in current joint doctrine, intertwined with objectives and "termination criteria," are what often begets the greatest confusion, exacerbated by conflicting definitions of the term itself.  This chapter highlights the term's current conflicts and confusion.  It then proposes a clarified role for end states and a relationship to objectives and termination criteria, first in the simpler case of war with an enemy, and then in a case more representative of the complex strategic environment (international interaction from peace to war with the full spectrum of actors in the environment).

### *Recent Confusion of End States and Termination*

The latest definition of end state is "the set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander's objectives."[64]  While this definition has remained *relatively* fixed over the past decade, as shown in Table 5 on the following page, its subtle shifts are quite significant and may be readily appreciated for the confusion they contribute to joint operations planning.

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[63] Clausewitz, 700.
[64] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), GL-15.

**Table 5. Definition of Strategic End State, 1995-Present**

- "An end state is the set of required conditions that achieve the strategic objectives." – *1995 and 2001*[a]
- "A strategic end state simply means the required conditions that achieve the strategic objectives." – *2002*[b]
- "Strategic end state (definition of victory or success)." – *2002*[c]
- "The desired end state should include both the desired political and military conditions after the military strategic objectives are attained." – *2002*[d]
- "…a set of national strategic objectives that comprise the desired national strategic end state." – *2006*[e]
- "…the President and SecDef typically will establish a set of national strategic objectives. This set of objectives comprises the national strategic end state — the broadly expressed diplomatic, informational, military, and economic conditions that should exist after the conclusion of a campaign or operation." – *2006*[f]
- "Thinking of this 'end state' as an integrated set of aims is useful…" – *2006*[g]
- "In its strategic context, military victory is measured in the attainment of the national strategic end state…" – *2006*[h]
- "…national strategic end state — the broadly expressed conditions that should exist at the end of a campaign or operation." – *2006*[i]
- "…national strategic end state —the broadly expressed political, military, economic, social, informational, and other conditions that should exist after the conclusion of a campaign or operation." – *2006*[j]

Sources: [a]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (1 February 1995), III-2; U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (10 September 2001), III-2; [b]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-00.1*, II-3; [c]Ibid., II-1; [d]Ibid., II-3; [e]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), xii; [f]Ibid., I-16; [g]Ibid; [h]Ibid; [i]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), III-5; [j]Ibid., III-21.

First, the only concrete agreement in the above definitions of "end state" is that it should exist after operations or campaigns conclude. Significantly, however, it appears that with the publication of *Joint Operations* and *Joint Operations Planning* in 2006, among the multitude of contradictions between and within these two documents, the definitive subordination of end states to objectives ended. When the analysis shifts from national strategic end states to military strategic end states, understanding of the terms becomes no more congruent, and introducing "termination criteria" alongside objectives and end states confuses matters more, as shown in Table 6 and Table 7 on the following page.

**Table 6. Definition of Military Strategic End State, 1993-Present**

- "A military end state includes the required conditions that, when achieved, attain the strategic objectives or pass the main effort to other instruments of national power to achieve the final strategic end state. That end state describes what the NCA wants the situation to be when operations conclude—both military operations, as well as those where the military is in support of other instruments of national power." – *1993*[a]
- "The term 'end state' simply represents the set of conditions necessary to resolve a crisis and transition from predominant use of the military instrument of national power to other instruments." – *1995 and 2001*[b]
- "…military end state conditions normally will represent what combatant commanders want their campaigns to achieve…" – *1995 and 2001*[c]
- "[Military] End State – What the National Command Authorities want the situation to be when operations conclude – both military operations, as well as those where the military is in support of other instruments of national power." – *2001*[d]
- "This end state normally will represent a point in time or circumstance beyond which the President does not require the military instrument of national power to achieve remaining objectives of the national strategic end state." – *2006*[e]
- End state – "the set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander's objectives." – *2006*[f]
- "…operational design continues with development of the military strategic objectives, which comprise the military end state conditions." – *2006*[g]
- "The Military End State…is the set of required conditions that defines achievement of all military objectives. It normally represents a point in time and/or circumstances beyond which the President does not require the military instrument of national power as the primary means to achieve remaining national objectives." – *2006*[h]

Sources: [a]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (14 June 1993), 6-1; [b]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (1 February 1995), III-2; and, U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (10 September 2001), III-2; [c]Ibid; [d]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02* (12 April 2001), 145; [e]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), IV-8; [f]Ibid., GL-15; [g]Ibid., IV-8; [h]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), III-8.

**Table 7. Present Definition of Termination Criteria**

- "…termination criteria — the specified standards approved by the President and/or the SecDef that must be met before a joint operation can be concluded."[a]
- "In its strategic context, military victory is measured in the attainment of the national strategic end state and associated termination criteria."[b]
- "Once established, the national strategic end state and termination criteria enable development of the military strategic objectives and military end state."[c]
- "Further, development of a military end state is complementary to and supports attaining the specified termination criteria and national strategic end state."[d]
- "Once the military end state is understood and termination criteria are established, operational design continues with development of strategic and operational military objectives."[e]
- "Once the termination criteria are established, operational design continues with development of the strategic military objectives and definition of the military end state."[f]
- "Once established, the national strategic objectives enable the supported commander to develop the military end state, recommended termination criteria, and supporting military objectives."[g]
- "While it may mirror many of the conditions of the national strategic end state, the military end state typically will be more specific and contain other supporting conditions. These conditions contribute to developing termination criteria, the specified standards approved by the President and/or the SecDef that must be met before a joint operation can be concluded."[h]
- **"Termination criteria** typically apply to the end of a joint operation and disengagement by joint forces. This often signals the end of the use of the military instrument of national power."[i]

Sources: [a]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), I-16; [b]Ibid; [c]Ibid., IV-7; [d]Ibid; [e]U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), III-11; [f]Ibid., IV-6; [g]Ibid., III-8; [h]Ibid; [i]Ibid., III-27.

Understanding the definitions of these terms, and how they relate to each other is no small problem as "the termination of all military operations that support attainment of the national strategic end state must be considered at the outset of planning."[65]  Based on the above definitions, one may reach any or all of the following contradictory conclusions for end states:

1. the end state achieves the objectives
2. attaining the objectives results in the end state
3. the end state is the definition of success
4. the end state is what campaigns achieve
5. the end state defines achievement of the objectives
6. the aggregate of the objectives is the end state
7. the aggregate of the aims is the end state
8. the aggregate of conditions is the end state

Furthermore, one may conclude any or all of the following for termination criteria:

1. Termination criteria must be met before operations can be concluded
2. The end state and termination criteria define military victory
3. National strategic end state and termination criteria drive military objectives and end state
4. The military end state enables development of termination criteria

## *National Strategic End States (The Simple Case)*

As the above discussion has shown, although this study reached definitions and roles for objectives, it cannot easily do the same for end states and termination criteria. However, one begins to do so by appreciating that neither of the later concepts can be clearly understood without first understanding their relationship to each other and objectives.  Therefore this section begins to establish the relationships between objectives and end states with a simplicity taken from the introductory lines of *On War*: "Force…is thus the *means* of war; to impose our will on the enemy is its *object*.  To secure that

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[65] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), xii.

object we must render the enemy powerless; and that, in theory, is the true aim of warfare. That aim takes the place of the object, discarding it as something not actually part of war itself."[66] Although relying on Clausewitz is always open to challenge of interpretation, it is fairly clear that his ideas may be readily translated into today's terms.

If the notion of national will is combined with that of grand strategy and a global view of the strategic environment, it may be postulated that a state's global vision intends to support its national purpose.[67] For example, the U.S. has long believed that its purpose, defined by the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution, is supported by a global community of well-governed states. This global vision thus becomes the will of the United States, and may be viewed as a particular set of desirable conditions in the global strategic environment (Fig. 6).
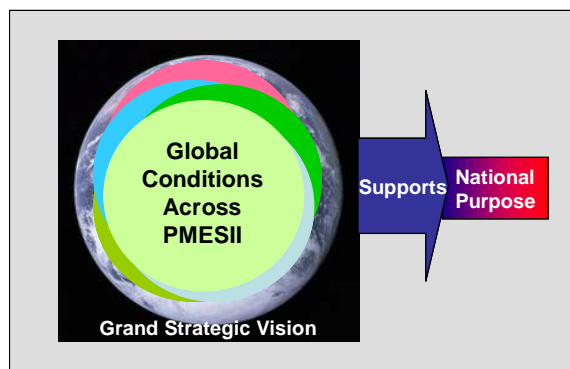


**Fig. 6. Grand Strategy and the Strategic Environment.**

However, one can assume that it will take some substantial national effort in order to secure the global vision, or national will, as global conditional impediments will often make transformation of the current strategic environment to the desired global strategic environment difficult (Fig. 7, following page).

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[66] Clausewitz, 83.

[67] While perhaps only applicable to a few states, global strategy is the broadest case, and facilitates later comparisons with the Cold War and the Vietnam War.
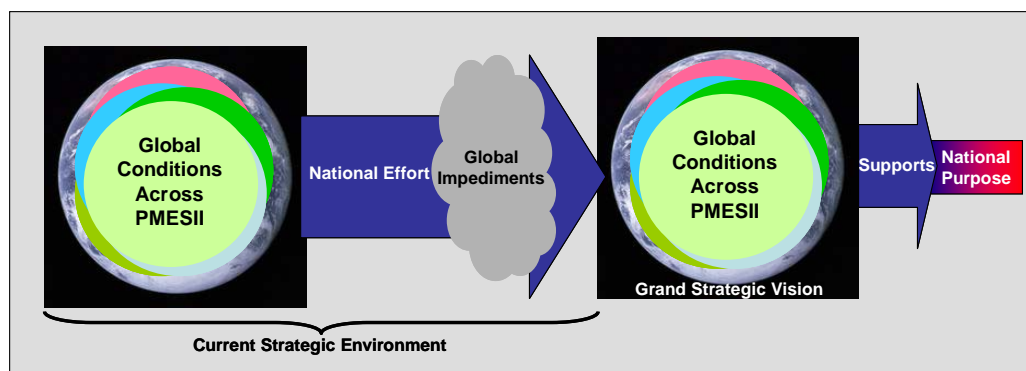
**Fig. 7. Transforming Current Strategic Environment to Grand Strategic Vision.**[68]

National strategies are a principle driver of the strategic environment, as "no two nations have precisely the same objectives; in a given set of circumstances, each will react according to its own needs. National objectives may bring a nation into conflict with others whose goals differ; they may lead to alliances with nations whose aims are similar."[69] Therefore, add the complexity of being opposed by enemies and adversaries, and challenged by competitors, and one can imagine a more complete global strategic environment such as the one depicted in Fig. 8.
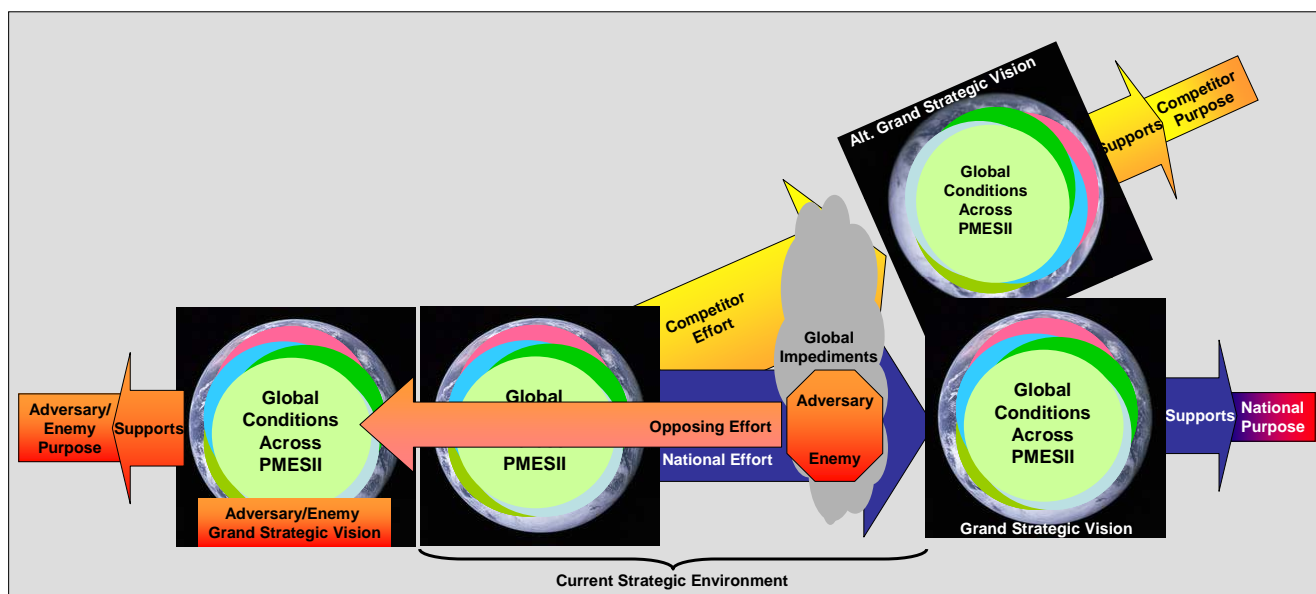


**Fig. 8. National Strategy in the Complex Strategic Environment.**

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[68] Note that "National Effort," may be considered to include alliances and coalitions.
[69] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (19 February 1962), 3.

In the case considered by Clausewitz in *On War*, the national will has been decided by policy, and the ultimate contest of wills has ensued, war with an enemy. Therefore the national strategic objective becomes imposing the national will on the enemy. This objective will only be possible when the enemy is powerless – the national strategic end state – or what Clausewitz calls the "true aim" of warfare. Once a state's armed forces are employed in pursuit of that national strategic end state, their military strategic objective (Fig. 9) becomes *rendering* the enemy powerless. Thus, one can see the relationship between national strategic objectives, national strategic end states, and military strategic objectives begin to emerge, hinted at when Clausewitz says the "aim" takes the place of the "object" in war (or seeking the national strategic end state takes the place of the national strategic objective, in order to properly focus military operations). In other words, pursuit of the national strategic objective in war involves leveraging the military instrument of national power in order to realize a national strategic end state dominated by the desired military conditions.
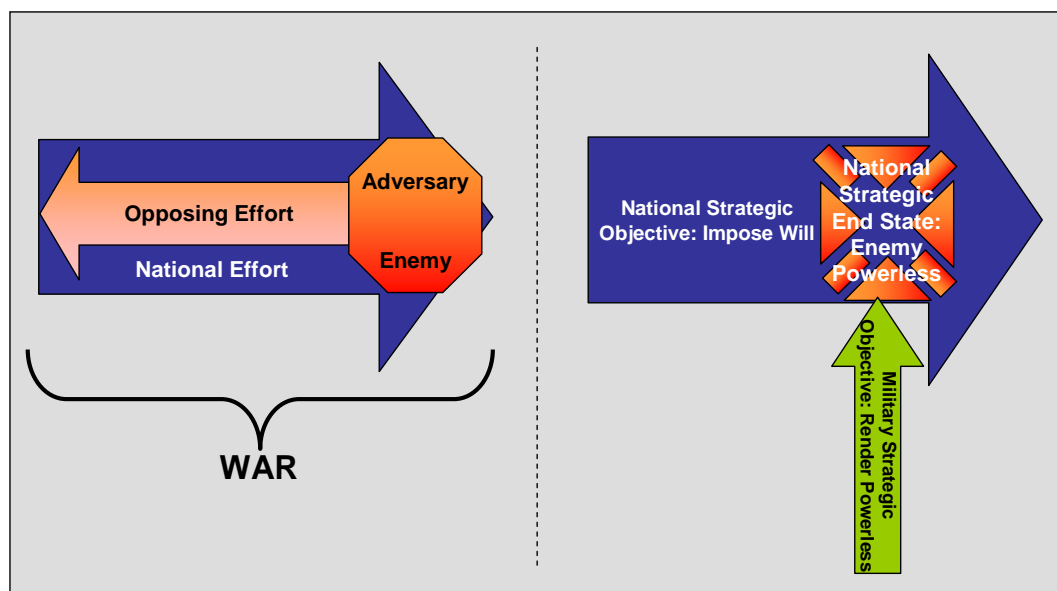


**Fig. 9. Simple Relationship between National Strategic Objectives, National Strategic End States, and Military Strategic Objectives.**

A key assumption must be true for the simple case above to be relevant; however, the simple case should not be considered a theoretical case, but rather a possible, albeit infrequent, reality.  Recall, the relevant actor is an enemy, and it is worth emphasizing that the situation is *war*.  For the simple case, the enemy's strategic center of gravity, or primary source of power behind its desired strategic ends, must depend upon the "military" category of conditions.[70]  We currently define the center of gravity as "the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act."[71]  Stated differently, the strategic center of gravity is that centripetal force which unifies a people in support of its will.

The simple case would require the following:

1. The centripetal force must be the domain of the leadership alone, usually a dictator, autocrats, patriarchs or politicians not bounded by popular approval, **and**
2. The state must seek all it has the power to gain (the key assumption behind "balance of power")

**OR**

1. The centripetal force must be national survival, **and**
2. The leadership must have control over the populace

In the situation of the first two requirements, war would either continue until Clausewitz's three "extremes" led to total war, or the leadership would continue until the costs of war outweighed the benefits of war (limited war).[72]  In the situation of the

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[70] A problem with establishing any simple model, such as PMESII, is the challenge of categorizing real conditions and actors in a complex system.  However, this study will consider "military conditions" the conditions and actors associated with formal security, paramilitary, and irregular forces capable of using force, or violent means.

[71] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), GL-8.

[72] Clausewitz, 83-86.  The first theoretical extreme is the reciprocal escalation of force by both sides in war, leading to a maximum use of unconstrained force by both sides.  The second is continuation of war until the enemy is rendered powerless, "So long as I have not overthrown my opponent, I am bound to fear he may overthrow me."  The third is reciprocal escalation of strength and effort, until both sides are completely committed to the maximum extent possible.

second two requirements, war would only be resolved by unconditional surrender, which was binding and enforceable by the leadership (e.g. Japan in 1945). In both cases, the strategic center of gravity is only assailable through the enemy's power to act in pursuit of his ends, or his operational center of gravity. Thus, distinguishing between the strategic and operational centers of gravity is useless.

### *National Strategic End States and Termination (The Complex Case)*

The simple, uncommon case, becomes decidedly more complex when national survival or unbounded leadership motivated for conquer are not the strategic context. More often, the power behind national will relies on critical capabilities such as manpower and wealth. To varying degrees, both require that the will of the people match the will of the leadership.[73] A mismatch of these wills results in a critical vulnerability to the enemy in its conduct of war. Furthermore, in the current age of communities of states (e.g. the United Nations, Arab League, NATO), states have abrogated a portion of sovereignty, requiring not only harmony between the people's will and leadership's will in the conduct of war, but some degree of harmony with the global community's will as well.

The complexity above begins the decoupling of the strategic and operational center's of gravity, because the centripetal force behind national will, or specific national strategic objectives, and the source of power behind the means to impose that will spread, probably disparately, across the full spectrum of PMESII. For example, informational or social conditions may drive national will, while the military remains the primary means. Alternatively, political conditions may drive will, while information becomes the means.

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[73] While most might readily see this as a requirement in democracies, it can be equally true for autocracies, as evidenced by the Russian Revolution.

This case becomes even more complex when national strategic objectives span the full strategic environment from peace to total war, as certainly here, one would expect desired national strategic end states to include significant conditional requirements across the totality of PMESII.  Once engaged across the spectrum in conflicts, competitions and partnerships, states must devise a strategy to "employ, all the elements of national power…in progress toward the ultimate objectives of the nation concerned."[74]  As a result, one arrives at situations where the military instrument will be insufficient to create national strategic end states alone, and while focusing on its contribution to military conditions, will often support the realization of other end state conditions by other instruments of national power (Fig. 10).
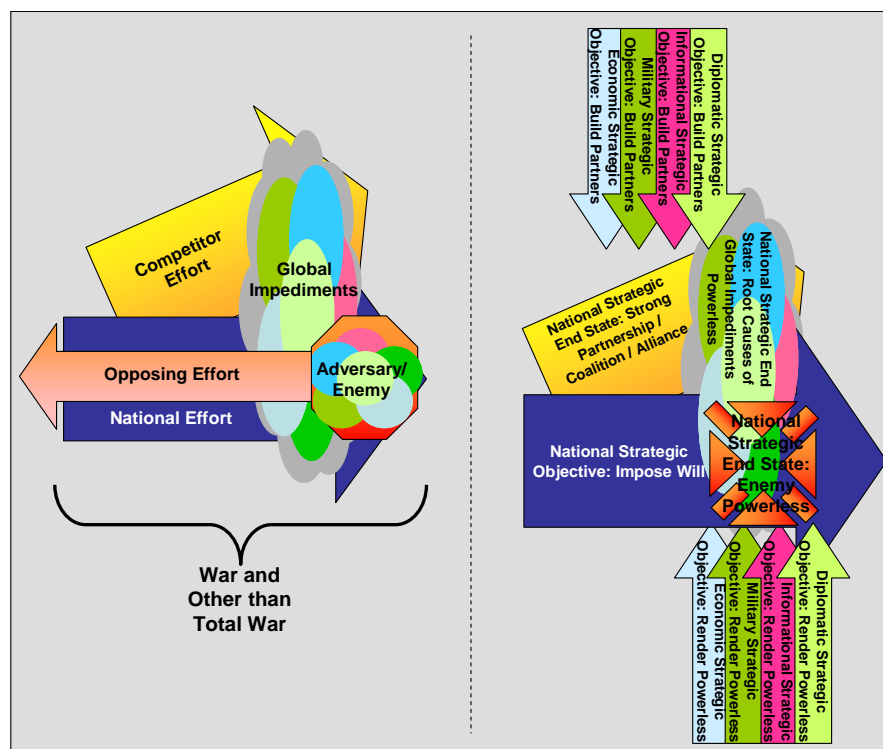


**Fig. 10. Complex Relationship between National Strategic Objectives, National Strategic End States, and Military Strategic Objectives.**

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[74] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (19 February 1962), 3-4.  In 1962, the elements of national power were defined as political, economic, psychological, and military, with sociological added in 1968 to Army doctrine.  These closely parallel DIME used today.

Therefore, one may appreciate **termination criteria** (depicted in Fig. 11) as the sub-set of national strategic end state conditions across PMESII that is the responsibility of a state's armed forces to create, or aid other instruments of national power in creating, prior to cessation of military operations.  Considerations for the commitment of military forces will begin within the context of, and subordinate to, these national strategic objectives, end states, and termination criteria, recognizing that "operations across the full range of military activities must complement the other elements of national power directed to accomplish political aims."[75]
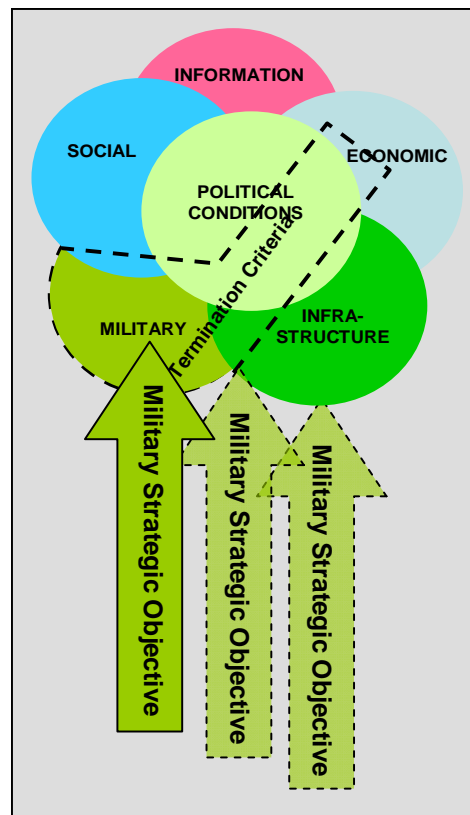


**Fig. 11. Complex Relationship of Military Strategic Objectives to National Strategic End States and Termination Criteria.**

What the above discussion indicates is that national strategic objectives will usually relate to imposing will on the strategic environment, while the **national strategic**

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[75] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (14 June 1993), 1-3.

**end state** will describe the conditions in the strategic environment required for those objectives to be achieved.  The objectives for the instruments of national power, including military strategic objectives, will focus action on the national strategic end state conditions achievable by that instrument, as well as the conditions they will support other instruments in creating.

## *Military Strategic End States*

Once military strategic objectives are determined, one may turn to defining the set of conditions in the operational environment which are required for achievement of these objectives.  In the "Simple Case," the military strategic objective was rendering the enemy powerless, and the enemy armed forces were its operational center of gravity. Therefore, in order to render the enemy powerless, its armed forces must be destroyed as a viable fighting force.  This is the single condition which is required to achieve the military strategic objective – it is the military strategic end state (Fig. 12).



**Fig. 12. Simple Relationship of Military Strategic
End State to Military Strategic Objectives.**

Analogous to the broad range of national strategic end states from war to peace, when military strategic objectives aim to create, or aid in the creation of, national strategic end state conditions across PMESII, in order to satisfy termination criteria, the set of conditions required to accomplish military strategic objectives expands beyond military considerations (Fig. 13).
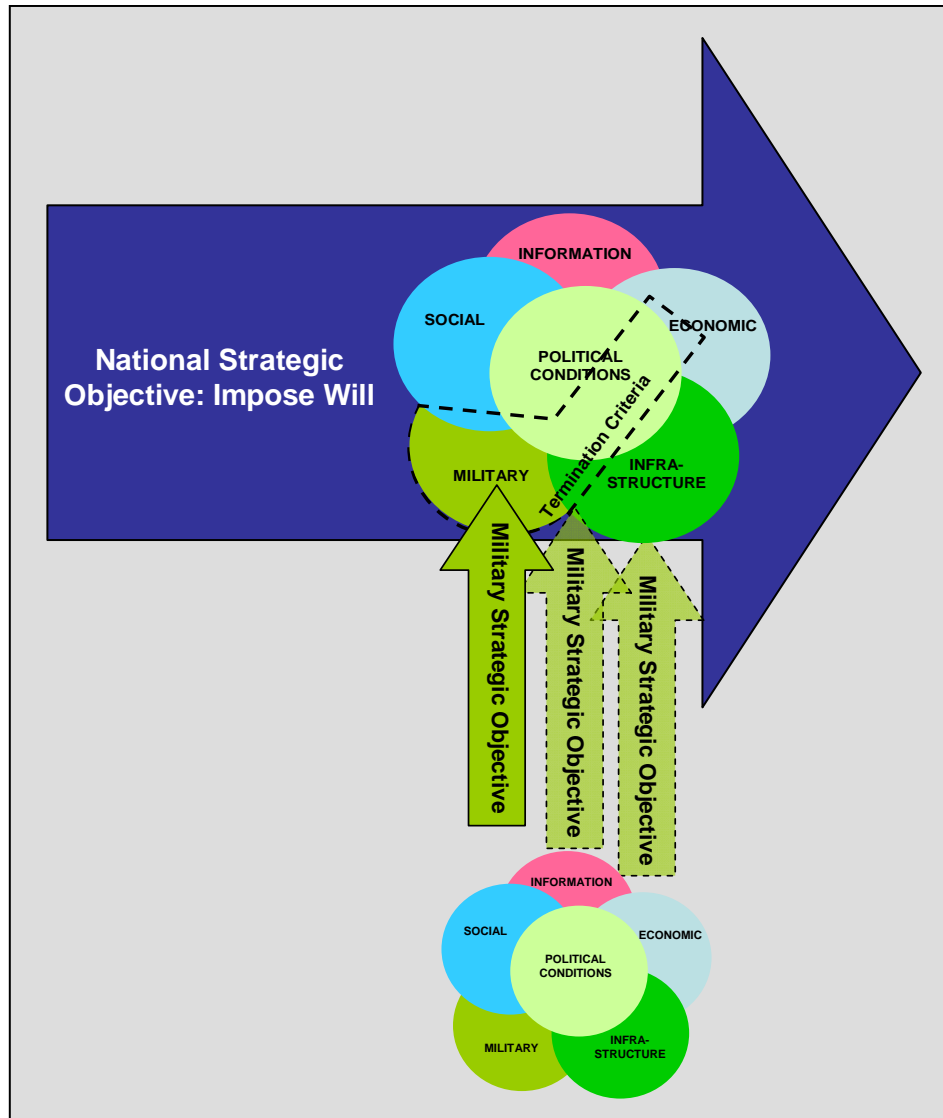


**Fig. 13. Complex Relationship of Military Strategic
End State to Military Strategic Objectives.**

In summary, the roles of objectives established in Chapter 2 may be expanded to

account for their relationships to end states and termination criteria as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8. Summary of the Roles of Objectives,
End States and Termination Criteria**

- **National Strategic Objectives** are the specific goals whose attainment will further the national interests, security and well-being articulated in a state's grand strategy.
- **National Strategic End States** are the set of conditions in the strategic environment which are required for accomplishment of national strategic objectives.
- **Termination Criteria** are the sub-set of national strategic end state conditions that is the responsibility of a state's military to create, or aid other instruments of national power in creating, prior to concluding military operations.
- **Military Strategic Objectives** are the specific goals for employment of a state's armed forces in support of its national strategic objectives. They support these objectives by contributing to the realization of the national strategic end state.
- **Military Strategic End States** are the set of conditions in the operational environment which are required for accomplishment of military strategic objectives.
- **Operational Objectives** are specific intermediate goals or targets of action, carefully arranged in time and space, which contribute to altering the conditions in the operational environment required for the successful accomplishment of military strategic objectives by the operation(s) or campaign.

# CHAPTER 4

## OBJECTIVE-END STATE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE VIETNAM WAR

Chapter 3 established the relationships of national strategic objectives, national strategic end states, and objectives and end states of the instruments of national power. This chapter reinforces those relationships through examining the motivations for U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. Additionally, it highlights the relationships between global and regional (or theater) objectives and end states.

### *Nesting of Regional and Global National Strategies*

More than 50 years ago, the Truman Administration issued NSC-68, "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security," dated April 14, 1950.[76] Drawing on the U.S. constitution, it eloquently asserted that the "fundamental purpose" of the U.S. is "to assure the integrity and vitality of our free society, which is founded upon the dignity and worth of the individual." In addition, it went on to conclude that "our free society" was "mortally challenged" by the "Soviet design." While the U.S. system sought a global community of free states, the Soviets created a conglomerate of Communist satellite states and practiced totalitarianism. The grand strategic visions were diametrically opposed leading to the Cold War (Fig. 14).
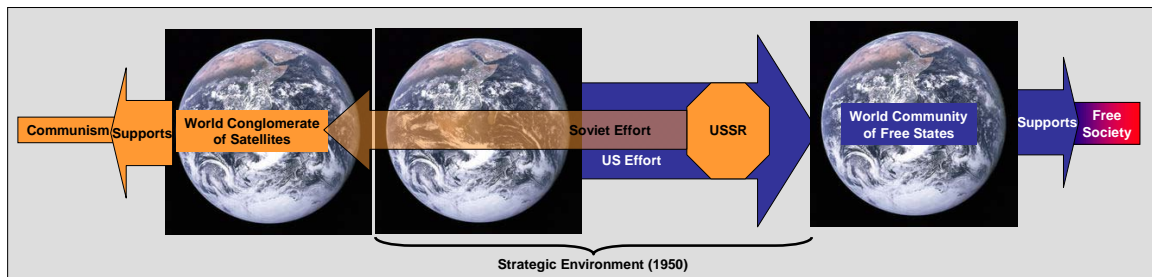


**Fig. 14. Cold War.**

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[76] This study considers the documents relating to the Cold War in the late 40s and early 50s as written articulations of contemporary thought, rather than chronological policy development and refinement.

The emerging Cold War with the USSR required a global view, because the U.S. grand strategy contained a global vision, and was challenged by the Soviets on a corresponding scale.  If the Soviets were not quite a global enemy, they were certainly a global adversary, and U.S. policy makers understood the relationships that emerge in this study when they determined the national strategic objectives.  They were "to reduce the power and influence of the USSR to limits which no longer constitute a threat to the peace, national independence and stability of the world family of nations; and, to bring about a basic change in the conduct of international relations by the government in power in Russia, to conform with the purposes and principles set forth in the UN charter."[77] The national strategic end state, or conditions required for accomplishment of these objectives, was dominated by a halted, and subsequently reversed, Communist expansion (Fig. 15).
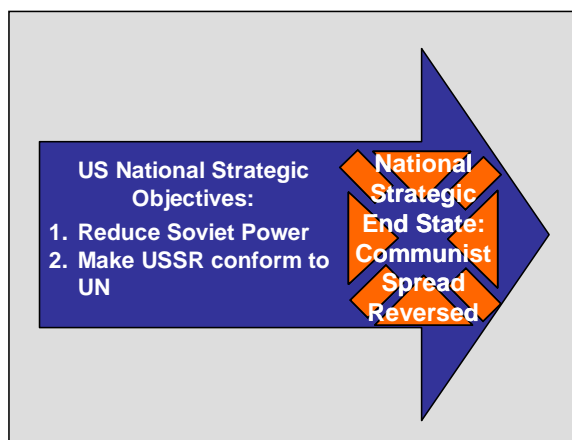


**Fig. 15. U.S. Objectives and End State for the Cold War.**

It is not often that two competing actors contest alternative visions, or wills, on a global scale.  It can be argued that today, only the U.S. has the capacity for unilateral global action, although certainly conglomerates collectively have this capacity (e.g. the

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[77] National Security Council, NSC 20/4, "U.S. Objectives with Respect to the USSR to Counter Soviet Threats to U.S. Security," 23 November 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, Department of State, 1948), 667.

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UN, the European Union, transnational non-state actors), and some may have unilateral capacity in the future (e.g. China, a resurgent Russia).

If one actor has the capacity for global vision, more often it will be regionally challenged by enemies, adversaries or competitors.[78]  In such a case, that actor requires regional objectives aimed at reducing regional enemies'/adversaries' power, convincing regional competitors a shared vision can be achieved, and overcoming regional conditional impediments.  These regional objectives and end states are nested within the overall grand strategy, because each focuses regional action within the strategic environment to support realizing a component of the desired global vision (Fig. 16).
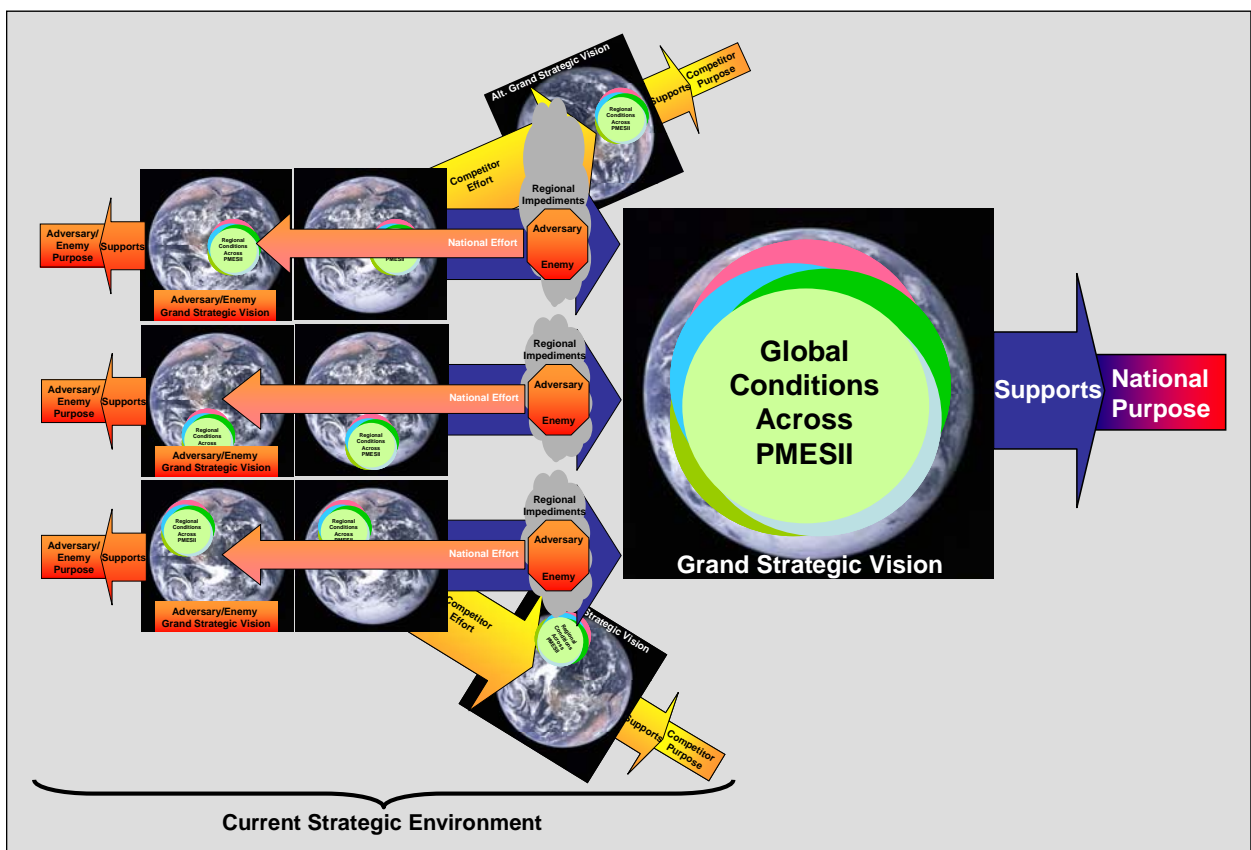


**Fig. 16. Regional Strategies in Support of a Global Vision**

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[78] While perhaps even more common are the contests between regional and local actors, this study begins with a global view in order to highlight the nesting of global, regional and local strategies.

However, because the Cold War was a bi-polar global conflict with the Soviets, the above U.S. national strategic objectives and end state in the late 1940s and 1950s were the U.S. global strategic objectives and end state. This is an important distinction because it nests the desired conditions around the World within the context of a global conflict, rather than views U.S. action around in the globe within the context of regional conflicts and strategies. It requires that regional objectives and end states nest within the specificity of global objectives and end states, rather than the broad visions of grand strategy. It preserves the U.S. attitudes of the time, which related almost all activity to Cold War objectives, and viewed communism as a monolithic threat. Rather than perceiving Communist China as simply a regional adversary (or enemy after the Korean War), it was viewed as an extension of the Soviet Bloc.

Therefore, one can view U.S. Cold War strategy around the globe through its more refined regional strategies, recognizing that each contributed to the global contest of wills, defined by the U.S. national strategic objectives and end state (Fig. 17). By 1954, a halted Communist expansion around the globe meant no expansion of the Iron Curtain in Europe, alliances in the Middle East which secured access to oil and denied the Soviets the same, and a stable Communist border at the Taiwan Strait, the 38th Parallel in Korea, and the 17th Parallel in Indochina.
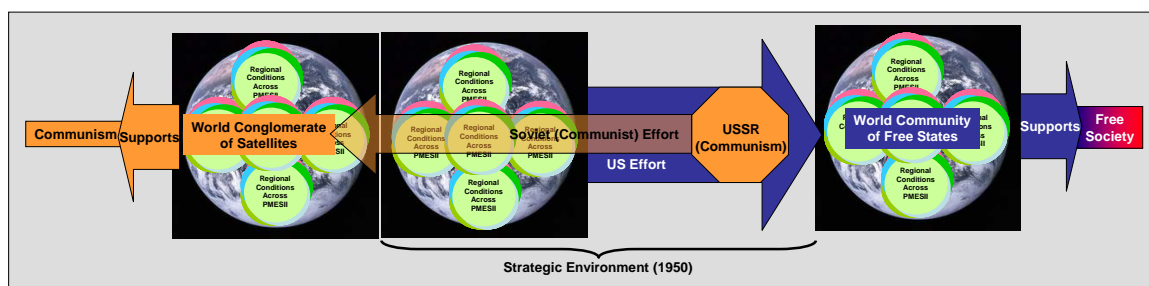


**Fig. 17. Regional Strategies Nested within the Global Cold War.**

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In particular, South and Southeast Asia were critical to U.S. Strategy, as losing

them to communism meant losing the resources (e.g. rubber and tin) they produced,

endangering access to Middle East oil, and ultimately threatening the economic, and

therefore security, interests of the U.S., Europe and Japan.  Conversely, it "would add

significant resources to the Soviet bloc."[79]  The U.S. response to Communist threats in

Asia would serve to shape Soviet and NATO allies' perceptions about U.S. resolve to

prevent renewed Communist aggression in Europe.  Therefore, the U.S. established

regional strategic objectives (Table 9) in support of the global Cold War.  Furthermore,

although not explicitly called an end state, one can infer that these objectives were

supported by regional strategic end states that included: 1) halted, subsequently reversed,

Communist expansion in Asia (mirroring the global strategic end state); and, 2) Southeast

Asian countries (who were imminently threatened), with free governments, the will, and

ability to resist communism from within and without.

**Table 9.  U.S. Regional Strategic Objectives, 1949-1954**

| U.S. Regional Objectives (Asia)[a] | U.S. Regional Objectives (Southeast Asia)[b] |
|---|---|
| 1.  Gradually reduce and eliminate power and influence of USSR in Asia; prevent further opportunist expansion into Southeast Asia<br>2.  Prevent power relationships which would enable another nation or alliance to threaten US security and independence of the Asiatic nations | 1.  Prevent the countries of Southeast Asia from passing into the communist orbit<br>2.  Pursuade them that their best interests lie in greater cooperation and stronger affiliations with the rest of the free world<br>3.  Assist them to develop toward stable, free governments with the will and ability to resist communism from within and without and contribute to the strengthening of the free world |

Sources: [a]Walter T. Kerwin, U.S. Army Acting Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, *US Objectives in Vietnam (28 March 1967)* [database on-line] (Washington, D.C.: Declassified Documents

[79] National Security Council, NSC 5405, "United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Southeast Asia," 16 January 1954, *The Pentagon Papers*, Gravel Edition, vol. 1 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 436.

Reference System, 1994, accessed 27 October 2006); identifier no. CK3100045378, 2; [b]National Security Council, NSC 5405, 434-443.

As the National Security Council concluded in 1954, while the integrity of Nationalist China and of cease fire at the 38th parallel were also essential, the retention of Indochina, subsequently South Vietnam after the Geneva Accords, in the face of communism was the most serious threat:

> In the conflict in Indochina, the Communist and non-Communist worlds clearly confront one another on the field of battle.  The loss of the struggle in Indochina, in addition to its impact in Southeast Asia and in South Asia, would therefore have the most serious repercussions on U.S. and free world interests in Europe and elsewhere.[80]

If South Vietnam fell to Communists, free world efforts to oppose communism in Malaya, Indonesia, Thailand, Burma and all of South and Southeast Asia would be seriously jeopardized.[81]

Thus, the U.S. embarked upon a campaign in South Vietnam to advance Cold War strategic ends.[82]  There was a perfect linkage from this campaign, through the regional strategy, to the required global strategic end state and U.S. grand strategy – the domino theory.[83]  A successful campaign would undermine the power of people's revolution, or Khrushchev's "wars of liberation," thus contributing to the stated global strategic objectives of reducing Soviet power.  With Soviet power on the wane, U.S. grand strategy could be assured.

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[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] This study considers 1954 the beginning of the campaign in Vietnam, as this is the year when President Dwight D. Eisenhower authorized direct support to the newly formed Republic of Vietnam by Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam.
[83] National Security Council, NSC 5405, 436.

*The Contribution of National Instruments to National Strategies*

Recognizing that the U.S. had established, and nested, its national strategic

objectives and end states (globally and regionally), to more fully examine the

relationships sought by this study, it is also useful to consider the strategic objectives of

each of the instruments of national power in order to appreciate how they contributed to

realizing national strategic end states.



**Fig. 18. Military Strategic Objective in Support of Global Strategy.**

With respect to the U.S. global strategic objectives and end state, the main

military strategic objective was deterring Communist expansion through the threat of

massive nuclear retaliation (Fig. 18).  However, examination of the U.S. regional

strategic objectives and end state allows a more thorough appreciation for the way all

instruments of national power contributed to national strategic ends.  These historical

objectives were captured by the Department of the Army in 1967 (Table 10).

**Table 10. Regional Objectives for the Instruments of National Power, 1949-1954**

| U.S. Regional Objectives (Diplomatic) | U.S. Regional Objectives (Military) | U.S. Regional Objectives (Economic) | U.S. Regional Objectives (Social) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Protect US posiion an restore prestige in the region<br><br>2. Stabilize legal governments in the region<br><br>3. Maintain and support friendly governments in Cambodia and Laos<br><br>4. Prevent Vietnam from being incorporated in communist bloc | 1. Develop sufficient military power in selected non-communist nations of Asia to maintain internal security and prevent further communist encroachment by direct support of non-communist forces<br><br>2. Assist the Indo-Chinese states and France to restore stability with US military assistance<br><br>3. Create SEATO<br><br>4. Bolster will of Asian countries to fight communist expansion and subversion through limited military assistance<br><br>5. Defeat communist subversion in South Vietnam | 1. Achieve development of nations and populace of Asia on a stable, self-sustaining basis in accordance with the UN charter<br><br>2. Assist Indo-Chinese states to pursue peaceful development with US economic assistance<br><br>3. Assist SVN to maintain economic conditions conducive to the maintenance of non-communist regimes | 1. Assist Indo-Chinese states to pursue democratic development<br><br>2. Assist in the re-settlement of peoples under communist control |

Source: Kerwin, 2.

When one examines the above regional objectives for the instruments of national power, including military strategic objectives, one can appreciate their illustration of an earlier assertion made in this study. Strategic objectives for the instruments of national power focus action on the national strategic end state conditions achievable by that instrument, as well as the conditions they will support other instruments in creating. If these objectives had been achieved, they should have collectively resulted in a halt to Communist expansion in Asia. Thus, in addition to the linkage of the military campaign in Vietnam through the regional strategy to the Cold War, there were parallel linkages to non-military actions in the region as well (Fig. 19, following page).
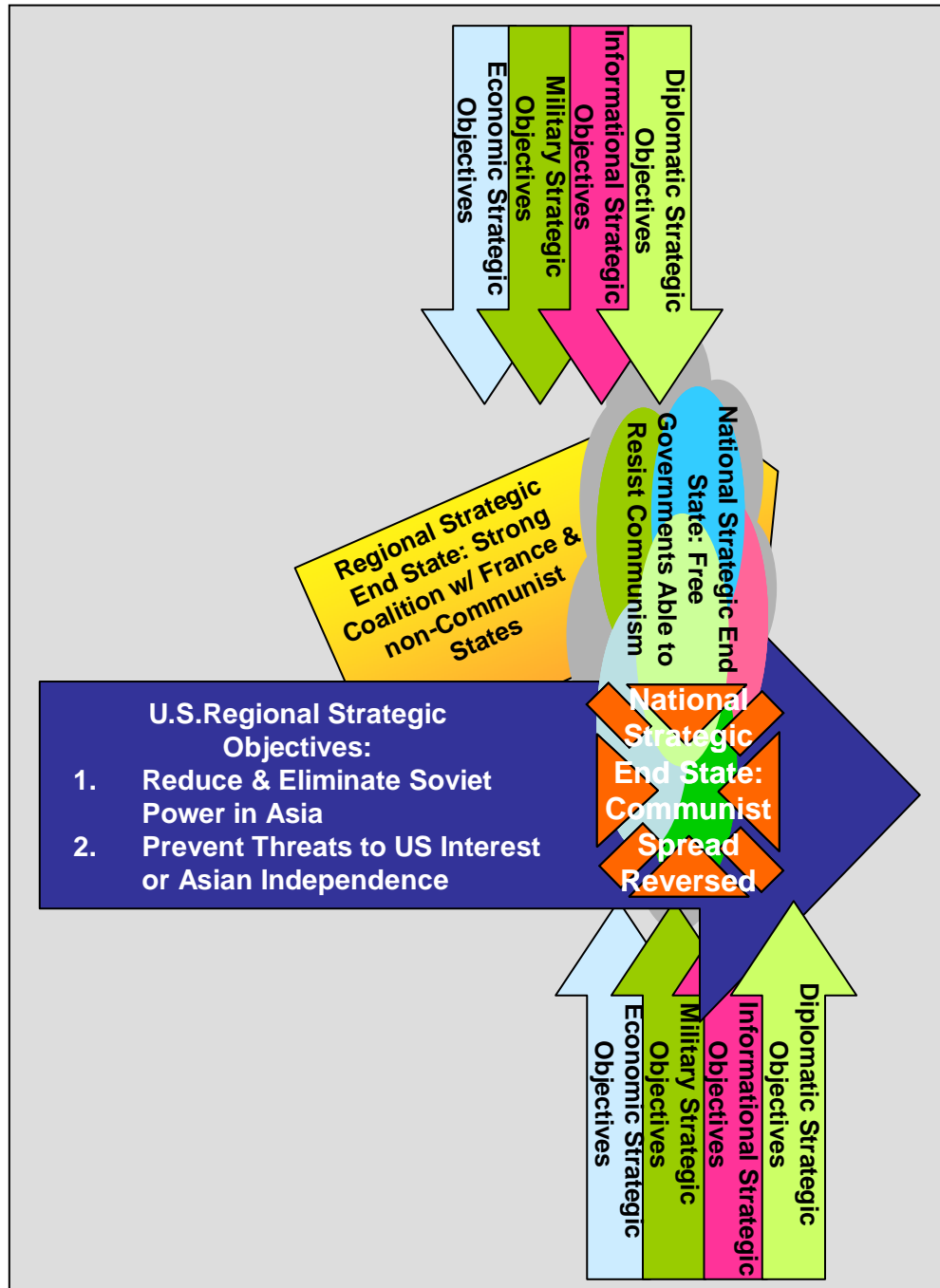
**Fig. 19. U.S. Regional Strategic Objectives and End State, 1949-1954.**

## CHAPTER 5

## INTRODUCTION OF EFFECTS INTO OPERATIONAL DESIGN

Ironically, the previous version of *Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations*, was published on September 10, 2001.  The events of the following day, coupled with experiences over the next two years in Afghanistan and Iraq, precipitated renewed examination of the limits and appropriate application of military power in complex strategic and operational environments.  The result was the introduction of an Effects-Based Approach to Operations (EBAO) into joint doctrine, culminating with the publication of a revised *Joint Publication 3-0* and *5-0* (*Joint Operations* and *Joint Operations Planning*, respectively) in 2006.

### *Brief History of Effects-based Approaches*

Current EBAO is based heavily on a systems view of the environment.  This view "treats adversaries and situations as complex, adaptive 'systems' that are the product of the dynamic interactions between connected elements and processes."  Taking a systems view is a way of better understanding "the structure and dynamics of adversaries and situations to the extent possible," allowing the joint force to "focus on perceived key elements and processes in the 'target' system…accomplishing the mission as effectively and efficiently as possible."  It supports "an expansion of the current combined-arms approach of joint operations to achieve greater levels of integration at strategic and operational levels in an increasingly complex, multi-dimensional environment."[84]

Probably the earliest modern example of an effects-based approach was not based on the above systems view, but on systems engineering.  Robert S. McNamara and the

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[84] U.S. Department of Defense, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 2005), 11-12.

team he relied on in the Department of Defense had backgrounds in improving business efficiency through focusing on achieving measurable goals. If the appropriate causal relationships could be determined, and they could be assessed through deliberately defined metrics, then they assumed the goal, or objective, could be achieved with minimal wasted effort.

Disgusted with the lack of options suggested by the military during the Cuban Missile Crisis, both President Kennedy and Secretary McNamara incorporated the thoughts of General Maxwell Taylor, with the resulting strategy of "flexible deterrence." This strategy provided the President with more than massive nuclear retaliation as an option in lesser contingencies.

When the situation in Vietnam began to escalate during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, the strategy of flexible deterrence met systems engineering in the form of "graduated pressure," or "flexible or graduated response." In order to dissuade the North Vietnamese from continuing their involvement in South Vietnam (i.e. change their behavior), the Defense Department engineered a list of targets, which if struck by U.S. and South Vietnamese forces, would increase the pain to North Vietnam to an intolerable level. In essence, a protracted campaign would be avoided without the massive bombardment that may have the negative impact of widening the war (particularly with respect to China).

However, as the U.S. military recovered from the war in Vietnam during the 1970s, it reshaped the way in which it employed airpower. Retaining the importance of strategic attack with nuclear weapons, it de-emphasized its employment for graduated pressure and re-emphasized its role in close air support. Nothing captured this better than

the U.S. Army doctrine of Airland Battle, developed with the U.S. Air Force, in 1982.

While the 1991 war with Iraq validated many of the concepts of Airland Battle, it also sparked great debate on more effective uses for airpower than attrition of enemy fielded military forces, largely due to the emergence of stealth and precision technologies. At least two related, but different forms of effects-based approaches emerged, born of the long debates in General Schwarzkopf's command center on how many planes to allocate to each mission on the Air Tasking Order (ATO), specifically, strategic attack or "battlefield air interdiction."

The first, championed by Colonel John Warden emphasized strategic attack for an effect reminiscent of the McNamara era, but different on two major premises. Rather than placing emphasis on efficiency, Warden emphasized the greater effectiveness of understanding the enemy as a system of what he illustrated in his famous five rings. At the strategic level, the innermost ring of leadership was successively surrounded by the system essentials, infrastructure, population, and fielded military forces. Similarly, at the operational level, the innermost leadership ring was surrounded by logistics, infrastructure, staff, and finally the military forces. Warden's thesis was that in modern war, with modern technology, the most effective approach to collapsing the enemy as a system was focusing on the innermost rings.

Unlike McNamara and his "whiz kids," Warden's only efficiency argument was that the more resources were committed to the outer rings, i.e. close air support against fielded forces, the fewer could be committed towards the more critical inner rings.[85] Not necessarily advocating a focus on the inner rings in every situation, Warden's ideas at

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[85] John A. Warden, *The Air Campaign*, rev. ed. (New York: toExcel Press, 2000), x.

least required consideration of which effects, against which targets, were most critical at which times in a campaign. Similar, and necessarily evolved, views of an effects-based approach continue within the Air Force, championed by leaders such as Lieutenant General David A. Deptula, who assert that an effects-based approach can compel an adversary's behavior and exploit technological advantages.[86]

The second, and related, approach that emerged from the Gulf War, championed by former Air Force Chief of Staff, General John P. Jumper, proposed that resources should not be allocated based on platform, but rather based on the effects which were desired by the commander.[87] In many ways, this approach is similar to the Army transformation of its fire support planning in the mid to late 1990s. Rather than allocating surface fires by purpose, priority, allocation, and restrictions, the Army began instead to think in terms of targeting task, purpose, method, and effect required. It is also similar to the direction in which joint information operations planning is heading.[88]

These three forms of an effects-based approach and their reasons for being have often generated very energized debates among military thinkers. Unfortunately, much argument comes before the differing parties even realize which approach each of them are championing or criticizing. This is the background against which the U.S. Joint Forces Command's proposal for an effects-based approach to operations has struggled for the past several years.

Championed most often as a way to improve the synergy between instruments of

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[86] David A. Deptula, "Effects Based Operations: Change in the Nature of Warfare," *Defense and Airpower Series* (Aerospace Education Foundation: 2001, accessed 11 February 2007); available from http://www.aef.org/pub/psbook.pdf; Internet, 17.

[87] John P. Jumper (speech delivered to participants in Unified Engagement on 26 July 2004).

[88] For more on information operations planning, see U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-13, Information Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 13 February 2006, accessed 19 January 2007); available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_13.pdf; Internet.

national power in achieving objectives, the JFCOM proposal for an effects-based

approach to operations, after much collaboration and refinement, is the approach which

has finally been codified in emerging joint doctrine.  Therefore, rather than discussing

approaches for efficiency, systemic effectiveness, or resource allocation, this study will

focus on the operational design uses of EBAO as described in emerging doctrine.

### *Brief Summary of Current Approach*

This section objectively articulates the current joint doctrine, and how the effects-

based approach has been incorporated, allowing the doctrine to speak for itself through a

combination of the definitions, limited discussion, and examples used in Chapter III of

*Joint Publication 5-0*, 26 December 2006.[89]  The material in this section will not be

consistent with the study's preceding findings of historical and logical objective-end state

relationships.  Instead, it will highlight why the study presupposes a current confusion

based not only on inconsistencies with previous joint and Service doctrine, but also on

inconsistencies within the current effects-based approach itself.

First, current joint doctrine does not explicitly articulate the relationship between

the Joint Operation Planning Process (JOPP) and operational design.  While JOPP is the

standard joint planning process, operational design is used to "help commanders and

staffs visualize the arrangement of joint capabilities in time, space, and purpose to

accomplish the mission."[90]  However, the early considerations of both JOPP and

operational design share an emphasis on strategic guidance (termination, end state,

strategic objectives) and effects prior to developing courses of action (Fig. 20).  In fact,

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[89] Because this study also argues (in Chapter 3) that the same joint doctrinal publication contains multiple conflicting definitions, in order to avoid confusion, this section will rely solely on Chapter III of *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006).

[90] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0*  (26 December 2006), IV-2.

within joint doctrine, the detailed discussion of strategic guidance occurs during the

description of the JOPP, "Although Chapter IV, 'Operational Art and Design,' focuses on

operational design, this section discusses termination — along with the design elements

*end state*, *objectives*, and *effects* — because the [Joint Force Commander] and staff

require a clear understanding of these elements as they conduct mission analysis and

proceed through the remainder of JOPP steps."[91]
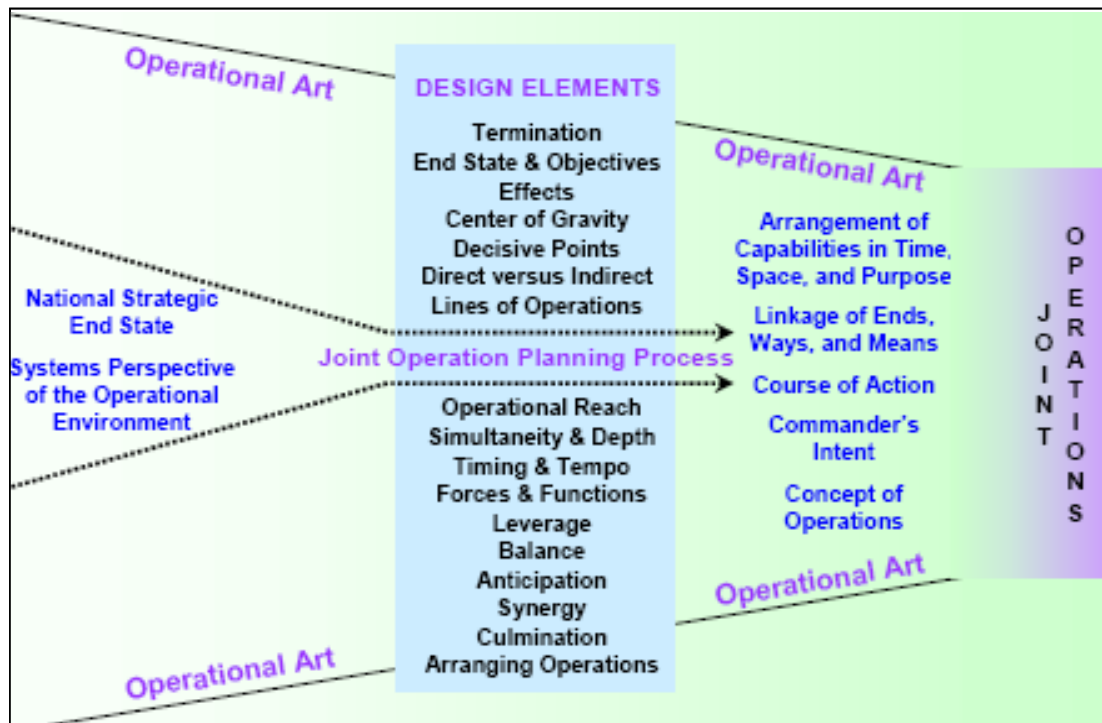


**Fig. 20. The Elements of Operational Design.**

First describing national strategic objectives, the discussion continues,

"Achievement of [national strategic] objectives should result in attainment of the

**national strategic end state — the broadly expressed conditions that should exist at**

**the end of a campaign or operation.**"[92]  Therefore, it introduces the example by stating

that the President provides "the following guidance, which contains national strategic

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[91] Ibid., III-7.
[92] Ibid., III-5.

objectives…that comprise the desired national strategic end state:"[93]

**Table 11. Example National Security Objectives Comprising the National Strategic End State**

1. Maintain the sovereignty of countries Gray and Green and reestablish the conditions for a secure and stable region.
2. Defend Gray and Green from Red attack and defeat or eject Red forces from Gray in the event hostilities commence.
3. Degrade Red's offensive military capabilities to the point that Red is not a significant threat to other countries in the region.
4. Support disaffected internal groups working to return Red to a representative government.
5. Identify and degrade terrorist capabilities in Red and elsewhere in the region as much as we can.
6. Help reinstate the former leader if the opportunity presents itself.
7. Support post-conflict operations in both Red and Gray.
8. Seek opportunities to strengthen regional nations' ability to defend themselves from future aggression by Red.

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), III-6 to III-7

Understanding "the objectives necessary to reach the national strategic end state [Table 11] will help the supported [Combatant Commander] formulate proposed *termination criteria* — **the specified standards approved by the President or the [Secretary of Defense] that must be met before a joint operation can be concluded**."[94] It also helps him formulate the **military strategic end state**, or "the set of required conditions that defines achievement of all military objectives."[95] The example proposes both as reflected in Table 12 and Table 13 on the following page:

**Table 12. Example Military Strategic End State**

1. Red's military has been defeated.
2. The regional security situation (Red, Green, and Gray) is stabilized.
3. US forces are no longer needed as the primary means to achieve national objectives, even though military support to postconflict stability or reconstruction activities will continue at some level.

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), III-9.

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[93] Ibid., III-6.
[94] Ibid., III-5.
[95] Ibid., III-8.

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**Table 13. Example Termination Criteria**

| |
|---|
| 1. Gray and Green borders are secure. |
| 2. A stable security environment exists in Gray, Green, and Red. |
| 3. Red no longer poses a military threat to the region. |
| 4. Non-DOD agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and/or nongovernmental organizations effectively lead and conduct reconstruction and humanitarian assistance operations. |
| 5. US military forces return to shaping and security cooperation activities. |

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), III-10.

While the national strategic objectives and end state direct the actions of all instruments of power, the military strategic end state and termination criteria establish the focus for military operations. "Once the military end state is understood and termination criteria are established, operational design continues with development of strategic and operational military objectives."[96] A **strategic military objective** is "a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal toward which every military operation should be directed."[97] Furthermore, military strategic objectives "should link directly or indirectly to one or more higher-level objectives; next, they should be as unambiguous as possible; finally, they should not specify ways and means for their accomplishment."[98] Table 14 captures the example military strategic objectives:

**Table 14. Example Military Strategic Objectives**

| |
|---|
| 1. Gray and Green sovereignty is maintained |
| 2. Regional terrorism is reduced |
| 3. Regional security and stability are restored |

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), III-12.

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[96] Ibid., III-11.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.

Once strategic guidance is understood, and military strategic end states,

termination criteria and objectives are developed, current joint doctrine advocates

beginning to consider effects. Joint doctrine captures the description of an effect as

follows:

> An effect is a physical and/or behavioral state of a system that results
> from an action, a set of actions, or another effect. A desired effect can also
> be thought of as a condition that can support achieving an associated
> objective, while an undesired effect is a condition that can inhibit progress
> toward an objective. Throughout [Joint Publication 5-0], the term
> "effects" is intended to mean both desired and undesired effects unless
> otherwise specified.[99]

The examples of effects in the above scenario are captured in Table 15:

**Table 15. Example Effects**

Objective 1: Gray and Green sovereignty is maintained
    Effect (E) 1-1: Gray and Green leadership facilitate rapid reception and
    deployment of US forces
    E 1-2: Regional countries do not oppose US deployment
    E 1-3: Red does not attack Gray or Green
    E 1-4: If deterrence fails, coalition defeats Red's attack
    E 1-5: Coalition restores integrity of Gray's and Green's borders
Objective 2: Regional terrorism is reduced
    E 2-1: Country Red's ceases terrorist activities
    E 2-2: Regional transnational terrorist networks are disrupted
    E 2-3: Regional countries expand their antiterrorism and
    counterterrorism training, capabilities, and operations
Objective 3: Regional security and stability are restored
    E 3-1: Red is incapable of cross-border offensive military operations
    E 3-2: Red participates in diplomatic engagement with Gray and Green
    E 3-3: Regional countries support actions to oppose Red aggression
    E 3-4: Regional countries welcome US intervention

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), III-12.

It should be noted that joint doctrine advocates a better understanding of the

systems within the operational environment and their associated centers of gravity to aid

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[99] Ibid., III-12.

in deciding which effects will best support objectives.  These are somewhat

misunderstood concepts, but in depth discussion would be beyond the scope of this study.

The examples and brief discussion above is sufficient to summarize the current

joint doctrinal effects-based approach:

1. A better understanding of systems and their associated centers of gravity enables one to decide the desired effects (those conditions that support military strategic objectives)

2. Achieving military strategic objectives should lead to the military strategic end state and termination criteria, thus supporting the national strategic end state (the aggregate of national strategic objectives)

Thus one can see that effects support objectives which attain an end state, as illustrated in

Fig. 21.
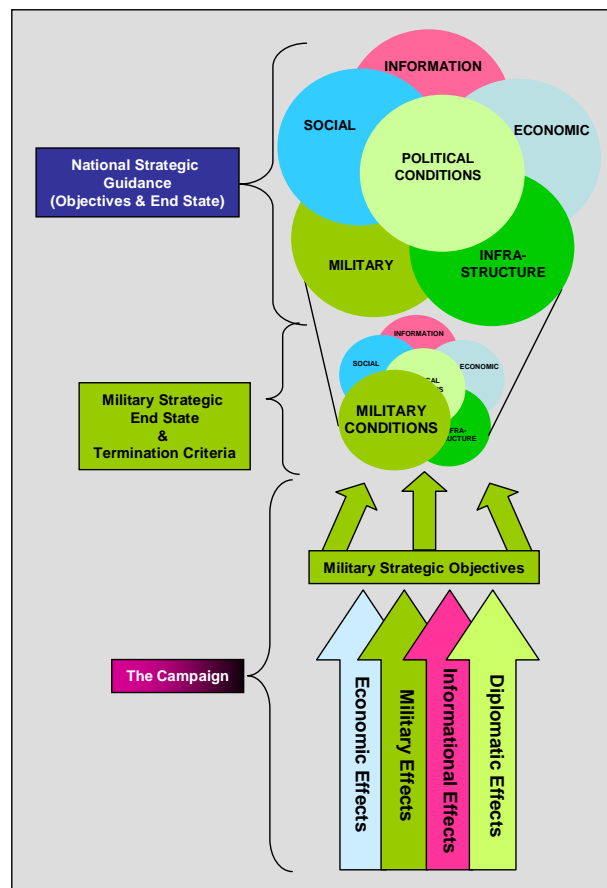


**Fig. 21 Current Joint Doctrine's Relationship of Effects, Objectives and End States.**

**CHAPTER 6**

**THE ROLE OF EFFECTS IN RELATION TO OBJECTIVES AND END STATES**

Chapter 5 highlighted the confusing way in which effects have been integrated into joint planning doctrine, and the way in which, perhaps as a result, the long-understood relationships between objectives and end states has suffered. This chapter begins with the basic definition of an effect, seeks a practical relationship of effects to objectives and end states, and evaluates the utility of considering effects at the different levels of war. Ultimately, it proposes a way in which considering effects can assist planners at the operational level, rather than continuing to confuse them.

## *The Basic Definition of an Effect*

The new *Joint Publication 3-0* captures the definition of an effect simply and serves as a good departure point for discussion:

> **Effect.** 1. The physical or behavioral state of a system that results from an action, a set of actions, or another effect. 2. The result, outcome, or consequence of an action. 3. A change to a condition, behavior, or degree of freedom.[100]

In other words, actions cause effects. As defined in Chapter 1, battles, engagements, operations (joint, major, etc.), and campaigns are all joint actions in the operational environment. That actions cause effects is a truism. Therefore, one can safely conclude that effects are the result of battles, engagements, operations (joint, major, etc.), campaigns, or other joint or interagency actions. This fact has been acknowledged in past doctrine by the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, at least when describing the effects of tactical action (Table 16, following page).

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[100] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), GL-14.

**Table 16. Historical Importance of Effects in American Military Doctrine, 1982-1997**

- "Designate and sustain the main effort is a combat imperative. During this discussion "the purpose of concentrating effort is to shock, paralyze, and overwhelm the enemy at the chosen time and place. To achieve this **effect** [emphasis mine], the tactician designates the objective and plans the employment of combat, combat support, and logistics means, using each to the greatest advantage in the overall scheme. By proper integration he achieves an effect that is greater than the sum of its parts." – *1982*[a]
- "Whenever operations in these environments occur simultaneously, the Army integrates and coordinates their **effects** [emphasis mine] so they mutually support the attainment of strategic objectives." – *1993*[b]
- "Synchronization is arranging activities in time and space to mass at the decisive point. For example, integrating the activities of intelligence, logistics, and fire support with maneuver leads to synchronized operations. It means that the **desired effect** [emphasis mine] is achieved by arranging activities in time and space to gain that effect." – *1993*[c]
- "The need to synchronize **effects** [emphasis mine] in the sequencing of operations is equally important in operations other than war." – *1993*[d]
- "Focus is the convergence of *effects* [emphasis mine]in time and space on some objective." – *1997*[e]

Sources: [a]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (20 August 1982), 2-8; [b]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (14 June 1993), 2-0; [c]Ibid., 2-8; [d]Ibid; [e]U.S. Department of the Navy, *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1,Warfighting* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 20 June 1997, accessed 27 January 2007); available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/service_pubs/mcdp1.pdf; Internet, 41.

## *A Clear Relationship between Effects and End States*

By their definition, end states and effects both represent conditions in the strategic and operational environments – the former representing some desired set of conditions at the end of an operation or campaign, and the later representing measurable changes in conditions. Therefore, despite no clear articulation of it currently in joint doctrine, there must be some direct relationship between end states and effects.

Recall from the end of Chapter 3 that national strategic end states are the set of conditions in the strategic environment which are required for accomplishment of national strategic objectives, and military strategic end states are the set of conditions in the operational environment which are required for accomplishment of military strategic

objectives. Additionally, there is wide agreement, even in the confusion of current joint doctrine, that a strategic end state should exist at the conclusion of a major operation or campaign.

First, there is a presupposition that all the conditions articulated in the end state do not exist at the beginning of a major operation or a campaign. Second, although there may be many final sets of conditions, the end state is a specific set, and one which will drive a continuation of operations until realized. Therefore:

> **The End State = initial conditions**
>    **+ intended changes to or preservations of conditions**
>    **+ intended new conditions**

If an effect is "the physical or behavioral state of a system that results from an action, a set of actions, or another effect,"[101] and a condition is "those variables of an operational environment or situation in which a unit, system, or individual is expected to operate and may affect performance,"[102] then an **effect = a changed or a new condition**. Additionally, an effect can be desired (supportive of objectives), or an effect can be undesired (inhibitive of objectives), which will require some counter-action or plan adjustment. Effects can be the unintended result of action, which are lucky if they happen to be desired, but in many cases may be undesired. Hopefully, effects are the intended results of deliberately planned action, which by definition are desired (one would not intentionally generate an undesired effect). Therefore:

> **The End State = initial conditions + intended effects + unintended effects**

> **Or**

> **The End State = initial conditions + desired effects + desired effects – undesired effects**

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[101] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), GL-14.
[102] U. S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02* (16 October 2006), 112.

However, if the major operation or campaign is to continue until the end state is reached, the joint force will continue to generate desired effects until undesired effects are overcome. Additionally, it is nonsensical for major operations and campaigns to be undertaken for purposes of *creating* initial conditions, but they may be undertaken for, or depend upon, *preservation* of supportive (or desired) initial conditions. Therefore, accounting for these last two presuppositions, one can arrive at the following conclusion:

**The End State = desired preserved conditions + desired effects**

For practical purposes, **preserving desired initial conditions and generating desired effects leads to end states.**

Finally, the above conclusion applies to both national strategic end states and military strategic end states – the former describing the strategic environment and the later describing the operational environment. One might ask why the military strategic end state describes conditions in the operational environment. As established by Chapter 3, the military strategic end state is strategic in nature not based on the environment it describes, but based on the fact that it describes the set of conditions required to achieve military *strategic* objectives (recall that in the "Simple Case," a destroyed enemy military was the required condition to achieve the military strategic objective, rendering the enemy powerless, and that a powerless enemy, the national strategic end state, was required to achieve the national strategic objective of imposing will).

## *How Effects Relate Objectives to End States*

In the "Simple Case" of Chapter 3, military force is employed to render the enemy powerless (the military strategic end state). In this simple case, one can assume that, initially, the enemy has powerful will. In other words, if the military strategic

objective is accomplished, the conditions in the strategic environment that serve as the source of power behind his *will to act* are changed to the set of conditions in the strategic environment which leave him powerless to resist friendly will, thus allowing accomplishment of the national strategic objective. This change in condition, based on the above section, may be understood as a strategic effect (Fig. 22).
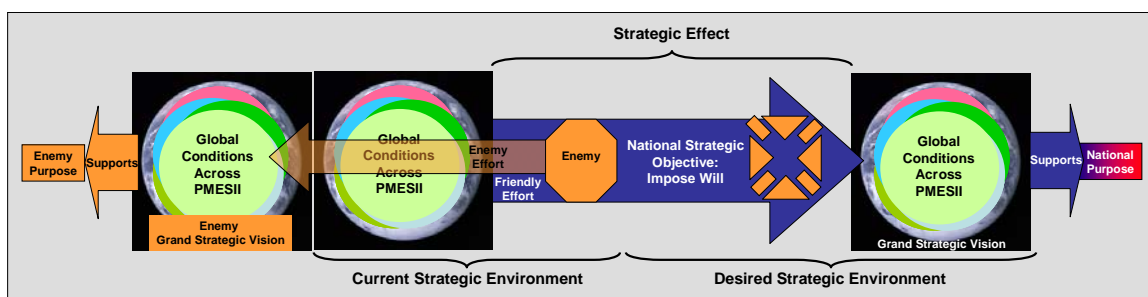


**Fig. 22. Strategic Effect in the Simple Case of War.**

Similarly, in the "Simple Case," the condition in the operational environment that serves as the source of the enemy power *to act* is his capable armed forces. One can safely assume that, initially, his armed forces are able to further his will. Once his armed forces are destroyed, the single condition required of the military strategic end state is realized and the military strategic objective is accomplished. This change of conditions in the operational environment may be understood as an operational effect. Furthermore, one can appreciate that the operational effect results in the required military strategic end state, which in turn defines accomplishment of the military strategic objective, whose accomplishment has the required effect on the strategic environment (Fig. 23, following page).
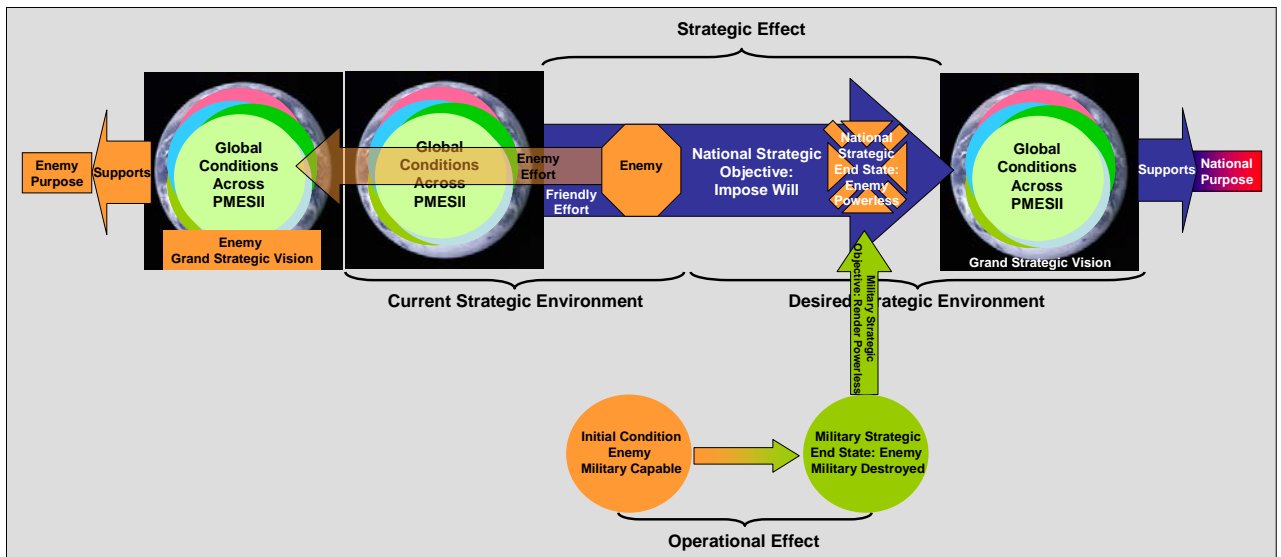
**Fig. 23. Strategic and Operational Effects in the Simple Case of War.**

Although the previous section showed Army and Marine Corps doctrinal

recognition of tactical effects, Table 17 below shows that recognition of effects *across*

*the levels of war*, as discussed above, has existed since at least 1939.

**Table 17. Acknowledgement of Effects in American Military Doctrine**

- "The *conduct of war* is the art of employing the armed forces of a nation in combination with measures of economic and political constraint for the purpose of effecting a satisfactory peace." – *1939*[a]
- "National objectives. Those aims or goals whose attainment will further national interests or produce effects conducive to national security and well-being." – *1962*[b]

Sources: [a]U.S. Department of War, *Field Manual 100-5* (1 October 1939), 27; [b]U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5* (19 February 1962), 3.

That accomplishing objectives is expected to have an effect can also be deduced

from the role of objectives and the definition of an effect. Recall from Chapter 2 that

objectives are specific goals or targets of action; national strategic objectives being the

specific goals whose attainment will further the national interests, security and well-being

articulated in a state's grand strategy; and military strategic objectives being the specific

goals for employment of a state's armed forces in support of its national strategic objectives.

Strategic objectives serve to focus all action on specific goals. Since a goal is, by definition, a desired result, and results of action are effects, the objective, or focus of action, is on a desired effect. This realization is why the only advice U.S. Joint Forces Command can give to planning practitioners for differentiating between objective statements and effect statements is: "Passive voice is a convention that can help a [Joint Force Commander] distinguish an objective from an effect…"[103]

However, there is a greater role that objectives serve than merely articulating the goal. Otherwise, it would not matter whether a given statement is really an objective or an effect, or whether joint planning uses an effects-based approach, rather than an objectives-based approach. It is why this study deals with deducing the *roles* and *relationships* rather than just definitions.

First, what is meant by "*specific* goal?" On the one hand, "specific" means who is acting in pursuit of the goal. National objectives imply complete national action by all instruments of national power. Military objectives imply actions by the military the military instrument. On the other hand, "specific" means why the instrument(s) are acting. For national strategic objectives, the instruments are acting to further the national interests; for military strategic objectives, the military instrument is acting to contribute to the realization of the national strategic end state, alone, or perhaps by supporting other instruments of national power.

Second, *how* do strategic objectives <u>further</u> national interests, or <u>contribute</u> to the

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[103] U.S. Joint Forces Command, III-4.

national strategic end state?  The answer, as illustrated in the above figures, is that

national strategic objectives focus the actions of the instruments of national power, and

when achieved, produce an effect, or effects, that change conditions in the current

strategic environment to the specified conditions desired in the grand strategic vision.

Similarly, military strategic objectives, when achieved, produce an effect, or effects, that

change, or contribute to changing, conditions in the current strategic environment to the

specified conditions required by the national strategic end state

One can conclude, therefore, that current joint doctrine's assertion that actions

"create effects to achieve objectives to attain an end state" is flat wrong.[104]  In fact, the

actions of each instrument of national power are focused on objectives, or specific goals,

which when accomplished, have the desired effect(s), or contribute to the desired

effect(s), required to realize the national strategic end state.  Said simply, accomplishing

objectives is expected to generate the effects which lead to higher ends.  Chapter 5's

illustration of the current doctrinal relationship in Fig. 21 is therefore corrected in Fig. 24.
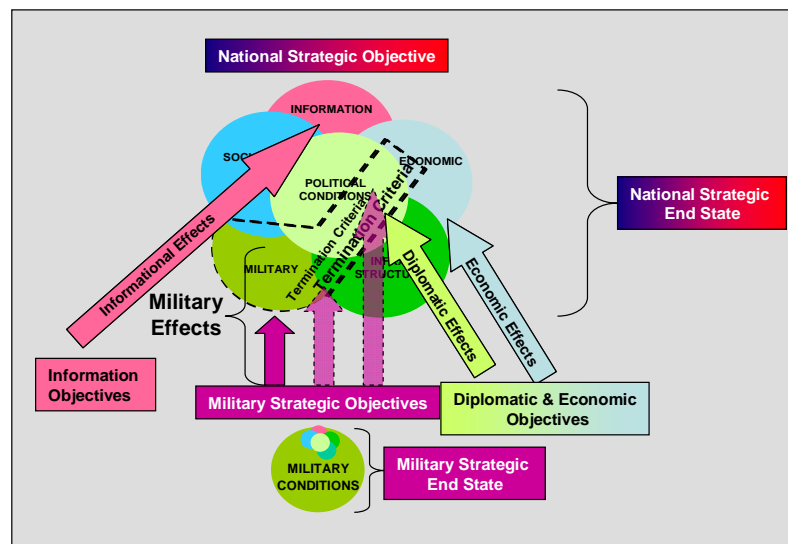


**Fig. 24. Proposed Relationship between Objectives, Effects and End States**

[104] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), iii.

## *Utility at the Strategic Level of War*

If one applies the above relationships of objectives, effects and end states to the "Simple Case" of war, the results are not very useful. Recall that the national strategic objective is to "impose the national will on the enemy," and the national strategic end state required for accomplishment of this objective is that "the enemy is powerless." If one were to articulate the effect in this case, it would sound something like, "the enemy becomes powerless," or something similar using active voice (as recommended by U.S. Joint Forces Command). Similarly for a military strategic objective and end state of "render the enemy powerless," and "the enemy armed forces is destroyed," respectively, the effect could be "Coalition forces destroy the enemy armed forces."

Even if one begins to consider the "Complex Case" from Chapter 3, which requires all instruments of national power to realize the national strategic end state, the objectives, effects, and end state relationship bears little utility in practice. For example, to realize the end state condition of "strong alliance," the diplomatic, informational and economic instruments may be focused on the objective of "build partners." If one recognizes that focusing activity on building partners (the objective) results in a strong partnership, coalition, or alliance (the higher end state), is there anything added by describing the change in condition (effect) from no partners today to a strong partnership in the future?

Ultimately, two specific observations seriously challenge the utility of articulating effects at the strategic level. First, once the national strategic end state is defined, the concept of objective is normally applied to the instruments of national power. The policy maker or planner asks: what is to be gained by commitment of the armed forces? The

answer, as established by Chapter 3, is the termination criteria – the required conditions

in the national strategic end state that the military is responsible for creating or aiding

other instruments in creating.  Therefore, the military strategic objectives, if properly

developed, are inherently effects-based, chosen on the grounds of which conditions in the

current strategic environment must be changed, and are within the capability to be

changed, by the military to the required end state conditions.  Similar questions follow for

the other instruments: what is to be gained diplomatically? Economically? Through

information operations and strategic communications?

Second, because the national strategic end state represents the final result of

action, any greater resolution that may be provided by considering desired effects may as

well be included in the end state, rather than in some other articulation.  If one considers

the "Complex Case" of war, instruments beyond the military must contribute effects to

the national strategic end state of "enemy powerless."  For example, diplomatic

objectives may orient on diplomatic isolation from the international community or past

enemy alliances, while economic objectives may combine with diplomacy to seek trade

sanctions.  However, these objectives can be articulated directly, and the associated

effects of accomplishing them, "enemy diplomatically isolated" and "enemy export

income eliminated," can be included in the end state to show their criticality in

supporting national strategic objectives.  Not only should this end state be more refined to

include the results of multi-faceted action, it must be as detailed and explicit as possible

to ensure subordinate objectives stay focused on its realization, and to enable assessment

of progress and continued relevance of operations.

*Utility at the Operational Level of War*

So far this study has almost exclusively remained at the strategic level of war, only brushing the wave tops of the operational level. Although some often attribute the operational level of war to some intermediate echelon of command between "strategic headquarters" and "tactical headquarters," its essence is best captured in the later half of its definition: "Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operational objectives needed to achieve the strategic objectives, **sequencing events** [emphasis mine] to achieve the operational objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events."[105] In particular, when strategic ends cannot be accomplished through a single major operation, the importance of the operational level of war and operational art, emerge center stage in the form of complex campaigns.

Once the military strategic objectives and end state are established, one may appreciate the campaign as responsible for preserving desirable initial conditions in the operational environment and generating the effects established by the future set of conditions in the end state. Therefore, the **campaign objectives** will focus military action, so that when achieved, they contribute to the military strategic end state (Fig. 25).
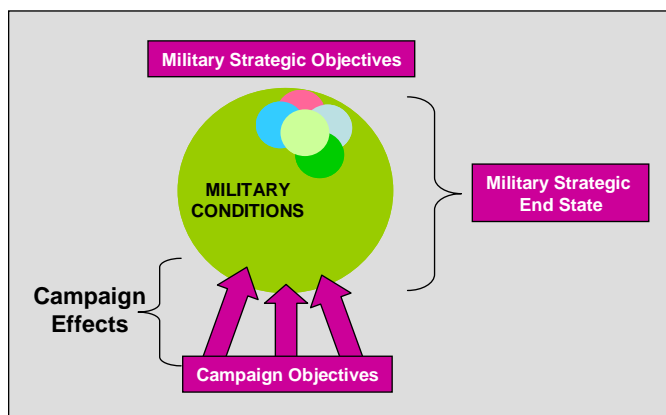


**Fig. 25. Relationship of the Campaign to Military Strategic Ends.**

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[105] Ibid., GL-25.

Although current joint doctrine implies that "end state" is only applicable to the strategic level of war (usually established by the GCC), doctrine's limited discussion of the term's use by joint force commanders and its basic definition certainly leave room for the term's application at the operational level of war.[106]  Additionally, in practice, the U.S. military continues to recognize a "commander's end state" at all levels, normally articulated as part of the commander's intent for an operation or mission.  Therefore, one can reasonably assert that a campaign commander will articulate a **campaign end state**, consistent with the term's role and relationship arrived at thus far in the study, and defined most basically as the **set of conditions in the operational environment which are required for accomplishment of the campaign objectives.**

That a campaign achieves either strategic or operational objectives is a recognition that, at times (e.g. World War II), multiple campaigns must be executed to achieve strategic ends.  Thus, the intermediate campaigns, (e.g. the North Africa Campaign) achieve operational objectives, while the final campaign, usually, achieves the strategic objectives.  However, although possible in practice, from a purist perspective, this does not mean that even the final campaign's objectives and end state should simply *be* the military strategic objectives and end state.  As illustrated in Fig. 25 the military strategic end state establishes requirements including non-military conditions.  Therefore, it will most likely require support from non-military instruments of national power.  The campaign, however, by definition, will only result in those conditions that can be created by the military instrument, acting under the military

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[106] The 2006 versions of Joint Publications 3-0 and 5-0 discuss only national strategic and military strategic end states in depth, mentioning commander's end states only briefly in sections on the JOPP.  The understanding of "end state" as only a strategic consideration is strongly implied by Figure III-1 in U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0* (26 December 2006), III-13.

commander.[107]  This is perhaps the distinction between a military campaign plan and a national war plan.

Campaign objectives are therefore synchronized and integrated with actions by other instruments of national power to create the military strategic end state.  Because this end state was nested, through the military strategic objectives, with the national strategic end state, the final campaign also results in meeting the termination criteria, or fulfilling military expectations and the required military support to other instruments of national power Fig. 26.
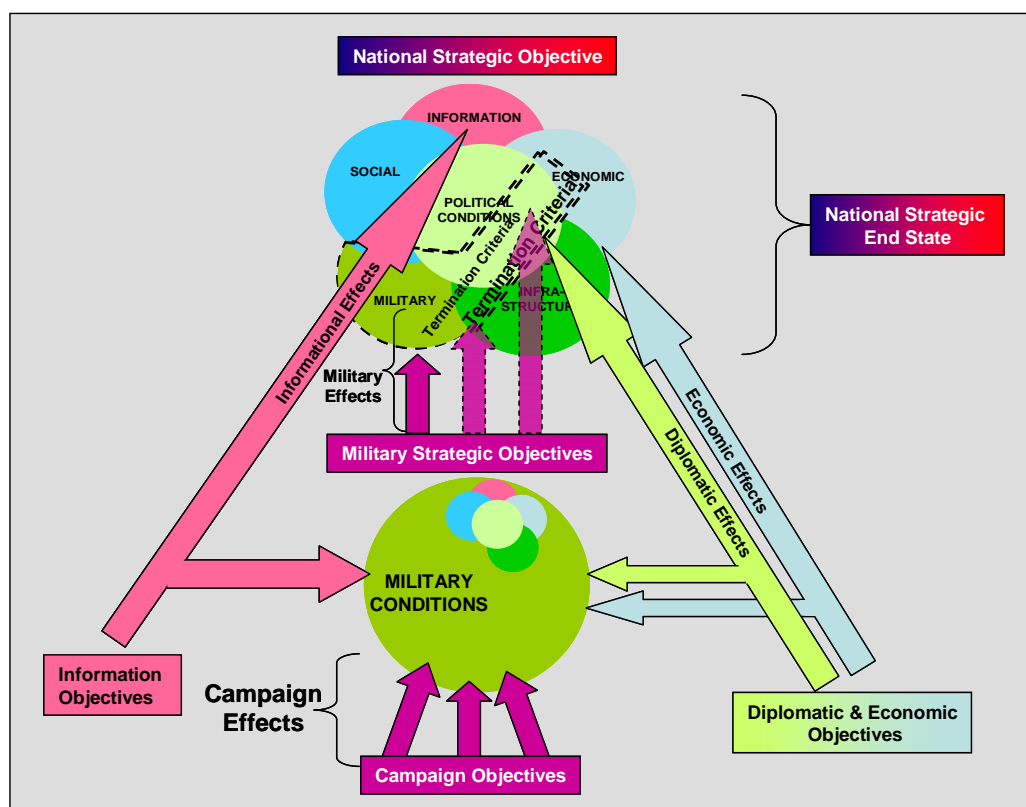


**Fig. 26.  Synchronization and Integration of the Instruments of National Power.**

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[107] This is not to imply that campaigns do not require significant participation by non-military agencies.  However, campaigns have historically been considered military activities.  Even the current concept of unified action advocates a commander's *synchronization* and *integration* with non-military agencies, versus direction of other agencies, in recognition that for the time being, unity of effort, rather than unity of command, is the maximum likely cooperation between U.S. national inter-agency assets.  Therefore, the likely future reality is unity of effort between military campaigns and inter-agency activity.

In order to scope the nature of the problem at the operational level, a campaign commander and his staff must use the appropriate tools of operational design to analyze the broad expressions of often ambiguous national "aims, objectives, goals, and end states," leveraging their best skills of deduction and inference, to form a complete picture of nested objectives and end states across the instruments of national power, from the national strategic level down to the military strategic level. Ultimately, the commander must understand the current operational environment, the envisioned military strategic end state, and the actors and impediments who oppose it. He must understand what the opposing actors seek instead, why they have that alternative will, the source of power behind that will, and what power they possess to act. Similarly, he must understand conditional impediments that would stymie his efforts even in the absence of opposing actors (e.g. disease, corruption, poor infrastructure), the root causes of those impediments, and their impact on the environment.

Although the campaign objectives and end state clarify the expected results of the campaign, or the *effect* of a successful campaign on the operational environment, the campaign end state will exist only after successful execution of any number of synchronized subordinate operations and activities. While the development of national strategic through campaign objectives and end states has the benefit of assessing current conditions and articulating the desired final conditions, the campaign *plan* must carefully prioritize, sequence, and synchronize intermediate operations such that the campaign end state is what results at campaign conclusion. In addition, as discussed above, the campaign commander must plan this prioritization, sequencing, and synchronization with non-military agencies not under his command. Simply stated, once the campaign end

state is understood, one must decide what operations must be executed successfully, in what sequence these operations must be executed, and what triggers a transition from one operation, or set of operations, to the next. This is where additional tools of operational design may be employed to develop competing solution sets for framing courses of action. It is also where thinking in terms of effects, and how they relate to objectives and end states, offers three potential contributions for complex situations.

A commonly used operational design tool for framing courses of action is identification of decisive points. A decisive point is "a geographic place, specific key event, critical factor, or function that, when acted upon, allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an adversary or contribute materially to achieving success."[108] First, its definition indicates that it *may* be some key terrain, key event, enemy critical vulnerability, or enemy ability to do something. Second, it is not decisive unless some action is tied to it (e.g. capture key terrain, execute the key event, exploit the enemy vulnerability, or eliminate/degrade the enemy's ability to do something). Finally, it is only decisive if it relates results of friendly action to the enemy or situation. In other words, the "marked advantage" or material contribution of a decisive point, when acted upon, is the desired effect, or change in condition, its accomplishment has on the operational environment.

Appreciating that one may consider actions in terms of what conditions they preserve or create allows the planner to begin arranging operations and backward planning from the desired end state to the current operational environment. First, what will be the decisive operation of the campaign, or what operation, when executed

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[108] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), GL-13.

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successfully, will directly lead to the campaign end state? Is the decisive operation the

final destruction of some critical enemy force, or is it the establishment of an operational

environment safe and secure from violence such that other instruments of national power

may succeed? Next, what conditions must be established by preliminary, or shaping,

operations prior to commencing the decisive operation? Are those shaping operations

along single or parallel lines of operations, are they simultaneous or sequential (or both),

what are the pre-conditions triggering their execution, and what are the final conditions

they are expected to create before shifting efforts to other operations in the campaign?

Using required conditions in the operational environment, or desired effects in the

operational environment, as the common bridge between decisive points leading to the

campaign end state can be a way of sequencing and synchronizing subordinate operations

(Fig. 27). Competing operational designs may then be evaluated on the basis of their

identified decisive points, the likelihood of generating their associated desired effects,

and the risks of these designs relative to realizing the campaign end state.
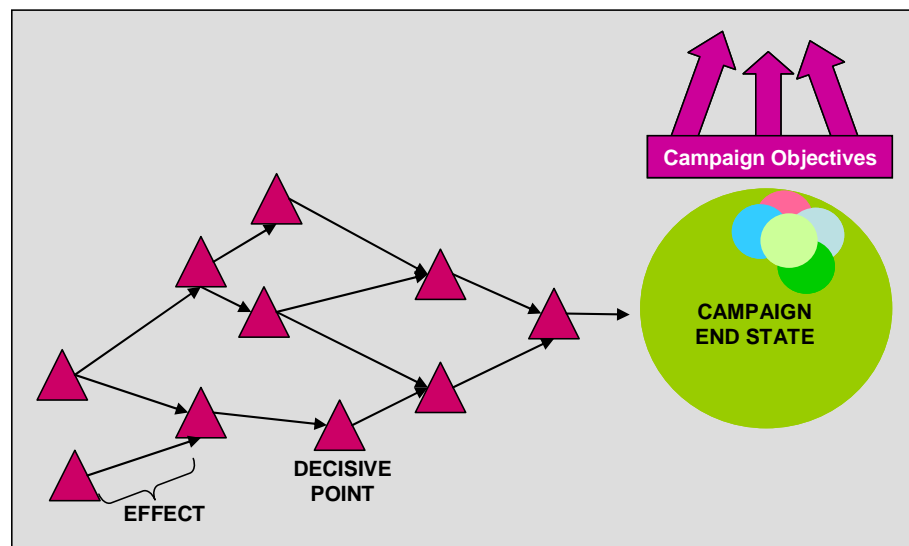


**Fig. 27. Considering the Effects of Decisive Points as a Tool of Operational Design**

Once an operational design is selected, decisive points become intermediate objectives for subordinate operations in order to focus all action on their accomplishment. While the operational design establishes *the approach* for solving the problem, possible solutions, or courses of action, are then generated linking subordinate tasks to objectives to *solve* the problem within the context of that approach. The current joint doctrine argues that effects are the linkage between tasks and objectives. However, one can go crazy considering the endless cascade of effects from strategy to point of action. Actions generate effects, effects change conditions, changing conditions appropriately results in objective accomplishment (period). What is important to the campaign commander or planner is that he designs operations with the required end state in mind, and orients subordinate actions on the objectives. Consideration of effects is a potential tool for *thinking through* the problem, but duplicative of the long-established military standards for *communicating* solutions, or plans, to subordinates: objectives, tasks and purposes.

However, as acknowledged above, the campaign will rely on synchronization and integration with other instruments of national power to achieve strategic ends. While objectives, tasks, and purposes are appropriate for communicating with subordinates, they are usually inappropriate for non-military agencies with more ambiguous command and control structures. Additionally, synchronization and integration with non-military partners is primarily a function of planning rather than execution. The decisions of what military actions will contribute to others, and vice versa, *throughout the campaign and its intermediate operations*, must be done during production of the campaign plan. For both of these reasons, it is potentially better to conduct this inter-agency planning on the basis of required conditions for, or expected effects of, intermediate operations (why actions

must be done), rather than simply on the basis of objectives (what will be done).

Finally, if the basis for campaign planning is the expected shifts in conditions from commencement through conclusion, one can develop measures of effectiveness that confirm or deny the initial assumptions that drove the campaign plan. When the designated objectives are achieved, a measure of performance, one can evaluate whether they had the intended effect on the operational environment, perhaps adjusting the plan if required.

# CHAPTER 7

## VIETNAM WAR'S LESSONS FOR END STATES AND EFFECTS

Chapter 8 proposed an appropriate integration of effects alongside objectives and end states, recognizing that consideration of effects offers some potential benefits in complex situations. Alternatively, this chapter highlights a few lessons from the Vietnam War that provide a degree of caution to the planner seeking to leverage those benefits.

### *The Importance of Timing Effects*

The easiest way to criticize U.S. conduct in the Vietnam War is to judge the approach as overly military-centric and too focused on attrition. However, this simplification would be incorrect and would hide an important lesson. There are no desired effects which are inherently superior to other effects. Timing actions in relation to changes in the operational environment is as important as understanding the right action to take. The right effect generated at the wrong time gains nothing.

First, it is important to recognize that if attrition means reduction in capability, and an effect is a change in condition, then applying military force against military capabilities is both an attrition-based and effects-based approach. Likewise, attrition *warfare* is intended to erode the enemy's will to fight over time – again, a strategy to generate an intended effect (although "time" may have different meanings among combatants).

Second, it is important to understand the Vietnam War within the context of the Communist approach. The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong waged a classic Maoist revolutionary war against South Vietnam. In Phase I of Mao's approach, the revolutionaries organize, consolidate and preserve base areas (enlist popular support). In

Phase II, they procure materiel through acts of sabotage and raids. Finally, in Phase III, they seek decision or destruction of the enemy *in conventional battle*.

Arguably, by the time the U.S. became directly involved in the Vietnam War, Phase I was well underway by the Communists. The first period of American involvement, 1955-1965, was characterized by a struggle between the Government of Vietnam (GVN) and the Viet Cong for control of the non-urban population areas. During this time, aside from Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), later Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), which did not grow significantly until the end of the Kennedy Administration, U.S. involvement was decidedly non-military by comparison to later years. In fact, most American energies and resources were political, social and economic, for example, government reform, information campaigns, land and economic reform, and improvement of civil defense.[109] Although there was some criticism that the GVN response was often inappropriately heavy-handed for counterinsurgency, the U.S. continued to increase pressure for a broader GVN approach to counterinsurgency as well.

Unfortunately, during this period, the Joint Chiefs of Staff observed extensive Viet Cong training in the North and infiltration back into South Vietnam, possibly at a rate of 1,000 per month.[110] As the U.S. Army observed retrospectively during the War, there was "an almost nonchalance to the idea that events could ever assume the serious proportions that they have in recent years." Not until 1961 was "a clarion call for 'full

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[109] For an example see *A Program of Action to Prevent Communist Domination of South Vietnam (26 April 1961 )*[database on-line] (Washington, D.C.: Digital National Security Archives, accessed 27 October 2006); transmitted to President via Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum on 6 May 1961; approved as policy by the President in NSAM 52.

[110] "Talking Paper for the Chairman, JCS, for Meeting with the President of the United States on Current US Military Actions in South Vietnam," 9 January 1962, *The Pentagon Papers*, Gravel Edition, vol. 2 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 656.

mobilization' of [South Vietnamese] manpower and resources" made, and no significant efforts to interdict insurgent infiltrations was attempted until at least 1964.[111]

The early recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during this period of the War were to "adopt the concept of offensive actions against the 'military power of the aggressor,' in this instance Communist China, rather than the concept of 'reaction locally at the point of attack.'"[112]  However, by the early 1960s, despite occasional recommendations from the JCS to bomb the North, calls for using U.S. military might to expand the war had long ceased.[113]  By the end of 1963, the U.S. planned to begin withdrawing advisors, focusing efforts within the borders of South Vietnam, specifically on stability and development of the Mekong Delta.

By 1965, the stage was set for a new period of the War and both sides to confront each other conventionally, as the North Vietnamese accelerated their approach to Phase III, and the U.S. committed hundreds of thousands of U.S. forces.[114]  By this period of concurrent conventional conflict and insurgency, however, the strength gained by the Viet Cong in the first period left General William Westmoreland in a dilemma of resources.  How much should he commit against the conventional forces of North Vietnam versus how much to commit against the Viet Cong insurgents, particularly as he assessed the insurgents living off the support of conventional forces, as opposed to the

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[111] Kerwin, 7-8.

[112] Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Defense of Southeast Asia in the Event of Loss of Indochina to the Communists," 21 May 1954, *The Pentagon Papers*, Gravel Edition, vol. 1 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 510.

[113] Although this chapter will go on to discuss the dilemma this causes General Westmoreland, he admits that he would have disagreed with bombing the North as late as 1964 (William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 126).

[114] This study considers this second period as lasting until the Tet Offensive, when the near decimation of the Viet Cong and popular support of the GVN resulted in the War eventually taking on a decidedly conventional character.

more typical Maoist condition of the reverse.[115]

     While a broad inter-agency effects-based approach can be seen in the first period of the War, it is often this second period that is judged to be attrition-based, because of near obsession with body counts. However, this does not necessarily stand up to scrutiny of the campaign plans, particularly the "Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), and Joint General Staff, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, Combined Campaign Plan 1967."[116]

     The 1967 campaign plan cites two objectives: "to defeat VC/NVA forces" and "to extend GVN control in the Republic of Vietnam." Within these objectives, one can see General Westmorland's dilemma. Defeating NVA forces meant fighting a campaign against enemy forces wherever they were, in such places as the A Shau Valley. Defeating the Viet Cong meant rooting out guerillas from local villages throughout South Vietnam.[117] While the NVA drove General Westmorland to an enemy focus, his objectives oriented on the Viet Cong and GVN were terrain-based. He simply did not have the forces to accomplish it all.[118] Failing to apply substantial effort to reverse the worsening military conditions in the first period of the war, left the U.S. little option but to deal with it directly in the second period of the war – thus seeking the effect of attrition. General Westmorland defends his "big-unit war" with the matter-of-fact observation that something had to be done against large enemy concentrations, lest he

[115] Westmoreland, 174-196.

[116] Available via the Declassified Documents Reference System.

[117] Westmoreland, 182.

[118] An interesting question is whether General Westmoreland could have economized forces by defending the A Shau Valley against NVA efforts to divide the Country, rather than planning the more manpower-intensive offensive operations against the NVA itself; however, analysis of specific strategies is beyond the scope of this study.

leave entire portions of South Vietnam vulnerable to Communist designs.[119]

However, despite a transition to conventional militarization of the U.S. war effort in the second period of the Vietnam War, the U.S. far from abandoned its emphasis on the other instruments of national power. Supporting the campaign plan cited above, were U.S. objectives aimed at fair elections, distributing positive messages of successes in Vietnam, eliminating corruption, increasing rice production, controlling inflation, land reform, debt control, and integration of former Viet Cong into South Vietnamese politics.[120] Furthermore, in his memoirs, General Westmoreland recalls his request to become the Commander in Chief, U.S. Forces, Vietnam, with a deputy for political affairs, one for economic and national planning, and one for military operations.[121]

What the American campaign in Vietnam illustrates, even in the periods of large U.S. military presence, is not an over-emphasis on attrition, but rather a full appreciation of the effects that could be generated by all instruments of national power, *which at times* heavily relied on military force for the effect of attrition. However, the long duration of the campaign in Vietnam tends to drive home the lesson that attrition, or any effect for that matter, is not inherently bad or inappropriate. At times during the Vietnam War, high-end attrition of enemy forces (i.e. preventing enemy training and infiltration during the first period) may have been a more appropriate effect than the chosen alternatives (i.e. defeating a strong insurgency concurrently with conventional invasion). Far more important than identifying all possible effects, or searching for the *right* effect(s), is committing sufficient analysis to what available effects at what times are most appropriate given the contemporary operational environment.

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[119] Westmoreland, 177.
[120] Kerwin, 4.
[121] Westmoreland, 258.

### *The Importance of Focusing on Conditions*

Another presupposition of current joint doctrine that deserves evaluation in the context of the Vietnam war is that an effect is **"**a change to a condition, behavior, or degree of freedom."[122]  This relationship, intentional or not, implies a dependent relationship between actions and changes to conditions, behaviors, and degrees of freedom, but also implies an independence between the later three variables.  This independence challenges the Clausewitzian notion that behaviors and degrees of freedom are dependent upon perceived power to act (or self-assessment of conditions).  It is significant that the record of "graduated pressure" in the Vietnam War supports the Clausewitzian notion rather than the current joint doctrine.

In the concept of graduated pressure, "the aim of force was not to impose one's will on the enemy but to communicate with him.  Gradually intensifying military action would convey American resolve and thereby convince an adversary to alter his behavior."[123]  Heavily debated within the U.S. Government during 1964, this program emerged from the "tit-for-tat" U.S. reprisals to what were perceived as direct North Vietnamese threats to U.S. forces in Vietnam.  However, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara was hesitant to intensify the war in the North beyond these deliberate reprisals.  Writing in a report to the President, he recommended against "initiation at this time of overt GVN and/or U.S. military actions against North Vietnam," although he did advise preparing these actions for such time as "the Khanh government takes hold vigorously" or "if we get hard information of significantly stepped-up VC arms supply

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[122] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-0* (17 September 2006), GL-14.

[123] H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997; HarperPerennial, 1998), 62.

from the North."[124] What the Secretary would have considered significantly stepped up

is puzzling since large scale North Vietnamese support was already known (i.e. the 1,000

Viet Cong per month returning to South Vietnam). His recommendation was approved

the next day in National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 288, "Implementation of

South Vietnam Programs."

From the outset of these debates, the Joint Chiefs of Staff took a very different

approach to expanding the war. In August 1964, they reiterated their position of two

months earlier (with which then Chairman General Maxwell Taylor disagreed) that

"military courses of action should include attack of targets in the Democratic Republic of

Vietnam (DRV) with the objective of destroying, as necessary, the DRV will and

*capabilities* [emphasis mine] to continue support of insurgent forces."[125] They rejected

the notion that the U.S. should be slow to get involved in the war, declaring, "The United

States is already deeply involved."[126] They again reiterated this position three months

later recommending the following (judging the possibility of forcing Chinese intervention

as less likely than other courses of action considered):

> Undertake a controlled program of intense military pressures against the
> DRV, swiftly yet deliberately applied, designed to have major military and
> psychological impact from the outset, and accompanied by appropriate
> political pressures. The program would be undertaken on the basis that it
> would be carried through, if necessary, to the full limits of what military
> actions can contribute toward US national objectives…[127]

The issue, therefore, was that while the Secretary of Defense (and at times

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[124] Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense, *South Vietnam (16 March 1964 ),* Memorandum for the President [database on-line] (Washington, D.C.: Digital National Security Archives, accessed 27 October 2006), 8, 15.

[125] Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Recommended Courses of Action-Southeast Asia," 26 August 1964, *The Pentagon Papers*, Gravel Edition, vol. 3 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 550.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Courses of Action in Southeast Asia (23 November 1964 ),* Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense [database on-line] (Washington, D.C.: Digital National Security Archives, accessed 27 October 2006), 3.

General Taylor) foresaw bombing the North to compel a change in behavior, the Joint

Chiefs foresaw no change in behavior unless the North's capability to act was destroyed

(a change in condition).  No one provides a better evaluation of graduated response than

General Westmoreland.  Although he acknowledges that states often impose restrictions

on themselves in limited wars, "the history of warfare contained no precedent" for

gradually increasing the tempo of operations when the means were available.[128]

As a result of graduated response, General Westmoreland concluded in his

memoirs that "the North Vietnamese could adapt to each new step and absorb the

damage."  While he goes on to doubt the impact of even a strong bombing campaign, it is

based on the feeling that, for the bombing to be effective, the North would also have to be

discouraged by counter-insurgency successes in the South.  Still he arrives at the

conclusion that graduated response was "one of the most lamentable mistakes of the

war."[129]  It is a significant lesson from the Vietnam War on the relationships between

conditions, behaviors, and degrees of freedom.  It is evidence that behaviors and degrees

of freedom are dependent upon actual or perceived conditions.  That behaviors and

degrees of freedom are at best 2nd or 3rd order effects of action must be appreciated by

campaign planners so they understand which of their assumptions are based on the highly

probabilistic field of predictive analysis.

### *The Importance of Re-evaluating End States*

The first two lessons of the Vietnam War indicate that actions aimed at generating

desired effects are highly dependent upon timing and realistic expectations of what may

be affected.  When one begins with the objectives and end states for Vietnam articulated

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[128] Westmoreland, 134.
[129] Ibid.

in Chapter 4, the third lesson indicates that even if timing, expectations and execution are flawless, effects-based and objectives-based approaches are only as good as their associated end states.

In the fall of 1963, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and General Maxwell Taylor visited South Vietnam to conduct an assessment. In November, President Diem was assassinated in a coup, placing an exclamation point next to the decade-long frustrations of developing good governance in South Vietnam. By early 1964, General William Westmoreland considered the growing threat of a North Vietnamese invasion should the U.S. escalate the conflict.[130] This was a vastly different operational environment than when President Eisenhower made his 1954 pledge to provide advisors to South Vietnam.

Yet, despite these deteriorating conditions, and another visit in early March 1964, Robert McNamara submitted his report to President Johnson, which articulated U.S. goals in Vietnam: "We seek an independent non-Communist South Vietnam. We do not require that it serve as a Western base or as a member of a Western Alliance. South Vietnam must be free, however, to accept outside assistance as required to maintain its security. This assistance should be able to take the form not only of economic and social measures but also police and military to root out and control insurgent elements."[131] As stated above, this report, approved by the President in NSAM 288, and accelerated by the incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin, would not only introduce the program of "graduated pressure" against North Vietnam, its approval would more than quintuple U.S. troop

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[130] Westmoreland, 126.
[131] McNamara, 1.

commitments in 1965.[132]

Although McNamara referred to them as "U.S. Objectives", the desired conditions contained in the excerpt from his report above also reveal the desired end state for the campaign in South Vietnam, almost identical to the strategic end states articulated in 1954 by such documents as NSC 5405. More importantly, within the same report, McNamara's asserts the same danger of losing South Vietnam to communism as was articulated in NSC 5405 (essentially the "domino theory'). Within the context of the relevant operational environment, the required increase of U.S. effort to meet the decade-old end state is readily understandable. What is less apparent is whether the desired end state in 1964 was as relevant as it was in 1954 to U.S. strategic objectives. At least two observations indicate that it was not.

First, the victory of communism in Vietnam, and its near domination of Southeast Asia, did not impact U.S. strategic interests in Asia. While this observation is made with the benefit of hindsight, some indicators were available by 1964. The Republic of China, with U.S. support and enough votes in the United Nations, had resisted claims and threats by the People's Republic of China for 15 years. Japan had entered into the "Golden Sixties" of economic growth. And, the Communist insurgency was defeated in Malaya.

U.S. policy makers also misjudged the extent to which China desired a powerful Vietnam. The inhabitants of Vietnam are one of China's historic enemies (the latest round of fighting occurring in 1979). As briefly discussed above, by the time of McNamara's report, the Joint Chiefs were beginning to seriously question whether expanding the war would result in Chinese intervention, and General Westmoreland calls

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[132] There were still fewer than 25,000 troops committed by the end of the 1964.

early fears of Chinese intervention "chimerical" in his memoirs.[133]

Second, the level of effort embarked upon in 1965 became a self-fulfilling

prophecy for its strategic importance. The more the U.S. fixated on Vietnam for a

decisive conflict with communism, the more its prestige as a defender of freedom was at

stake. This narrowed focus can be seen in Kennedy and Johnson Administration

documents, which starkly contrast with the more regional approach taken later by

Nixon.[134] This is not a finding arrived at by just this study. It is also a fundamental

conclusion of the Army Staff in 1967:

> An additional point of interest and one traceable through time, has been
> the geographical orientation of our stated objectives. Throughout the
> 1950s, our policy positions usually were concerned with Asia as an entity
> rather than exhibiting unusual interest in any particular segment. In those
> years, we concentrated on the dragon China, contemplating where the Red
> Hordes might move next and developed a strategy to hem them in on all
> sides. In the latter years of the decade, while we still referred obliquely to
> the continent entiere, the objectives were oriented towards [South
> Vietnam] as our commitment there increased. (Kerwin, 7.)

In other words, while the strategic assumption under Johnson's Administration seemed to

be that the outcome of the Vietnam war was critical to the region, policy under Nixon

appears to have concentrated quite a bit more effort on creating favorable conditions in

the region as a whole, particularly in China, for the same U.S. strategic objectives of

containing communism.[135]

The lesson which can be drawn from the Vietnam War is an important one for the

objective-end state relationship. Objectives establish specific goals for action – the

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[133] Westmoreland, 135.

[134] For further appreciation of this shift, please review the large body of documents from 1954-1975 available through the Digital National Security Archives, Declassified Document Reference System, and the U.S. State Department's *Foreign Relations of the United States.*

[135] These statements of the study are not intended to favor one President over another. The record of declassified official correspondence points to a noticeable shift during the Nixon Administration, with only minimal indications that it begins in the Johnson Administration's final year.

higher the level (e.g. national strategic) the more these objectives are tied to long-range strategies, and the less one would expect them to change. However, end states are based upon assessments of the environment, and what conditions are required to accomplish their supported objectives within an appropriate time horizon. Even if national strategic objectives remain relatively fixed, when the end state conditions required for their achievement shift over time, all subordinate objectives and end states, related to them as highlighted in this study, require adjustment and reevaluation to remain relevant.

As the regional situation improved over time, U.S. regional objectives aimed at containing and reducing Soviet influence in Asia were assured regardless of potential outcomes in Vietnam. Assuring these regional objectives supported U.S. Cold War global strategic objectives, which remained fixed relative to Soviet power and the spread of communism. In fact, as many began to realize in the early 1970s, continuing U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia could have actually provided *increased* opportunity for the Soviets to gain power through weapons upgrades and involvement elsewhere in the World. As it was, Colonel Tran was right: the winning of every battle in Vietnam by American military forces was irrelevant. However, in the global context of the Cold War, America's failing to win the Vietnam War was just as irrelevant.

In order to prevent unnecessary loss of national treasure in the future, one must appreciate not only the benefits and cautions of considering effects in planning, but also the subordination inherent in the objective-effect-end state relationship. One must appreciate that a critical first step is articulation of a clear end state, defining conditions that assure objective accomplishment. However, equally important is debate and consideration of alternative end states (at multiple levels of strategy), which fully take

into account changes in the contemporary strategic and operational environments. Only through this continual process can strategic objectives remain relevant to overarching national security interests and grand strategy.

**CONCLUSION**

It is clear that joint doctrine has introduced an effect-based approach to operations in order to provide commanders and planners with additional tools for the complex environments and future campaigns they face. However one must weigh the side effects of any remedy against the benefit it provides. The new doctrine fails to clearly articulate its advantages and scope of applicability, allows inconsistencies internal to itself and with previous doctrine to remain, and causes confusion in formerly well-understood concepts. In other words, its risks are high relative to its gain.

However, if the new joint doctrine's failings begin with its departure from well established and understood doctrinal concepts, this study reorients the planner on those concepts to re-establish the roles and relationships of objectives and end states, from the strategic through operational levels of war, and from a global perspective to that of a campaign. The good news for advocates of an effects-based approach is that there has always been some degree of recognition placed on the effects of action, and the role of effects in planning fits nicely with that of objectives and end states. Its relationship is the bridge between objectives and higher end states; the focus of action and the expected final results of action, respectively.

While at the strategic level of war consideration of conditions and the instruments of national power expected to create or preserve them is best left to end state development, at the operational level of war, there are some benefits to considering effects. Establishing an operational design by backward planning from the campaign end state, and considering decisive points in terms of effects they generate through accomplishment, allows one to sequence and synchronize subordinate operations in terms

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of conditional expectations in the operational environment through the temporal

dimension of the campaign.  Effects open a line of communication with non-military

partners, allowing synchronization and integration based on mutual expectations, or unity

of effort where unity of command is a bridge too far.  Finally, they begin a process of

establishing conditional-based measures of effectiveness, which may be better indicators

of progress towards an end state than simply measures of performance alone.

However, one must be careful not to consider "effects," or synchronizing the

instruments of national power, as new concepts.  To do so would ignore some valuable

lessons for future application, at least as indicated by this study's review of the Vietnam

War.  First, rather than debating what constitutes an effect, what are better effects than

others, or what single effect can undermine the enemy's strategic center of gravity, more

time must be placed on debating what actions are more appropriate at what times in a

campaign to realize the conditional changes demanded by the end state.

Second, one must be wary of declaring an effect more than it has historically

proven itself to be.  It is a change in condition.  Behaviors and degrees of freedom are

variables dependent upon conditions, thus indirectly affected by effects.  It is perhaps true

that behavior modification or constraining degrees of freedom is thus a second order

effect; however, attempting to directly impact behaviors and degrees of freedom through

military operations amounts to chasing fool's gold.

Finally, effects are just another consideration in planning, and reshaping the

objective-end state relationship, through acts of commission or omission, presents a

dangerous risk to campaign planners and the Nation.  While effects can help clarify

objective-end state relationships, none of these three elements is complete without the

other two.  Failing to nest objectives with higher end states will result in wasteful action

or incomplete accomplishment of higher ends.  Failing to articulate objectives clearly

leads to supporting end states, and thus effects, which are inappropriate or unnecessary.

Ultimately, introducing effects into joint operation planning without clarifying the roles

and relationships between objectives, effects and end states will result in executing

campaigns which fail or are unnecessary to achieve strategic ends.

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